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FROM THE CHILD'S  
POINT OF VIEW

LORENCE HULL WINTERBURN

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From the Child's Standpoint

By Florence Hull Winterburn

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Very Sincerely Yours  
Florence Hull Hinderburn

# From the Child's Standpoint

Views of Child Life and Nature

*A Book for Parents and Teachers*

BY

Florence Hull Winterburn

*Author of "Nursery Ethics"*

New York

The Baker and Taylor Company

5 and 7 East Sixteenth Street

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ROBERT DRUMMOND, PRINTER, NEW YORK.

TO  
All Lovers of Children





## Preface

THE only reason any book has for being is that it contains something which people cannot do without. Tried by this standard this little book has for some time faltered upon the threshold, and would not appear now but for the belief of the author that it presents a few truths which, though evident to all the world, are usually ignored. In the course of a varied life experience I have continually observed persons expressing one kind of belief concerning children, and acting out another; and it has seemed to me that the great bar to an understanding of the little creatures is the intense, persistent egotism of adults.

All kindly disposed persons make occasional efforts to establish friendly relations with children, but anything which is only partly comprehended soon becomes wearisome; and as child nature is a profound subject, and, as Dick Swiveller said of beer, "cannot be tasted in sips," most people give over such efforts long before any real interest has been aroused in their minds.

In the study of human nature a moment's honest

sympathy is worth years of theorizing, and if we wish to know a child as he really is we must think and feel just as he does. My sympathy has always gone out instinctively to children; the impulse to look at matters from their point of view has overborne any ambition that may once have existed to be wise from an adult standpoint. This may explain the lack of systematic form in this volume. There are here only a series of little studies or sketches, woven together by a slight thread, in which I have tried to relate, as the child's spokesman, some of his ideas, feelings, and needs. It is sent forth as a missive from the child world, and if I have erred in my interpretation of their natures, have been superficial where I should have been profound, or weak where their champion should have been strong, the fault lies not with neglect, but in my incapacity. And my dear children will pardon their friend.

For courteous permission to reprint certain matter that has previously appeared in their publications I have to thank the publishers of *The Woman's Home Companion*, *The Sunday School Times*, and *Harper's Bazar*.

F. H. W.

NEW YORK, March 6, 1899.

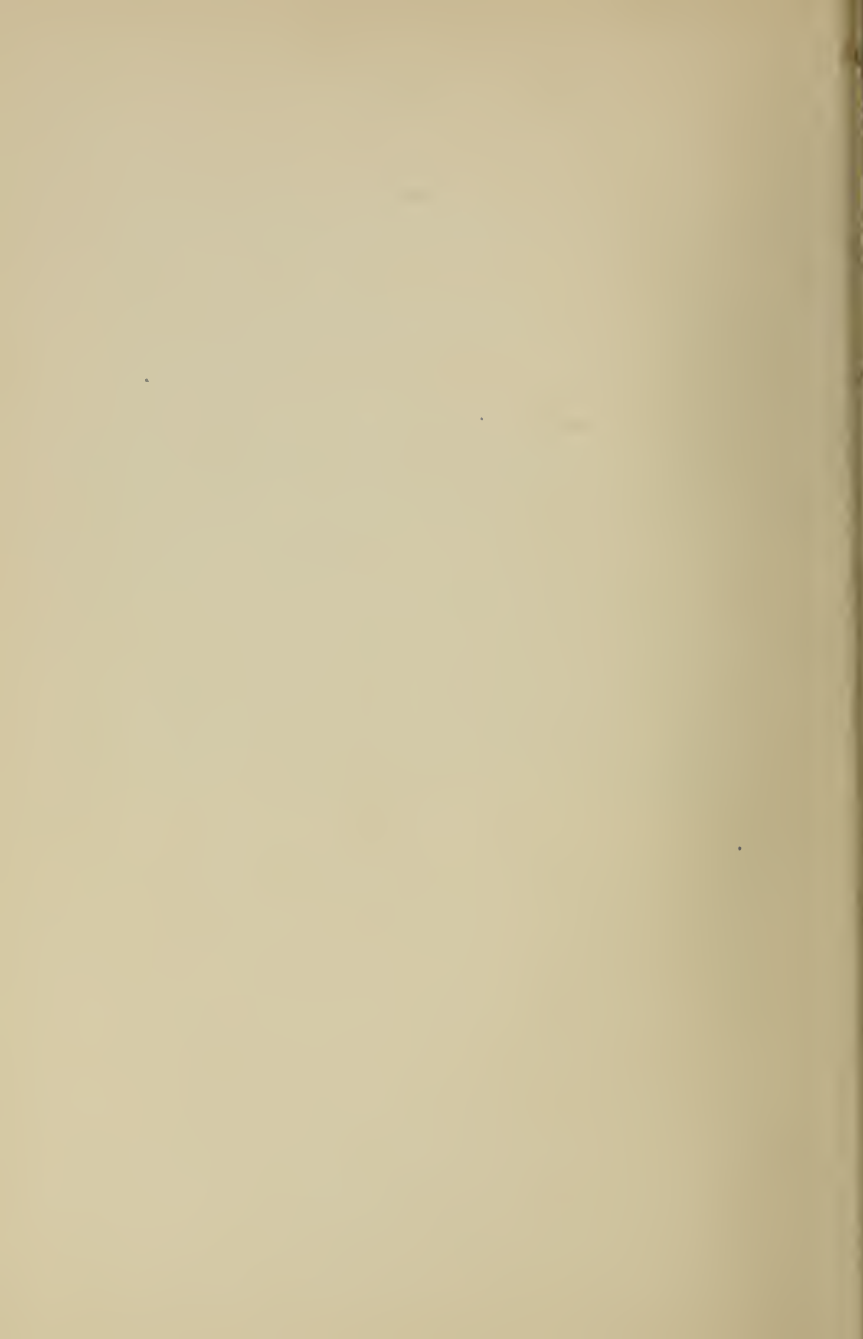
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There is no plummet science can throw that will infallibly sound the depths of the most simple child's heart and mind. If he thinks our thoughts and shares our feelings it is with one signal difference: narrow and concentrated vision gives him an intensity that we rarely experience. Where we are broad and shallow, he is keen; true to instincts that have not been dulled by the thousand conflicting interests which are recognized by older minds. So if we would know the child as he is, we must know him through his feelings, source of all his acts and aims. By viewing him in detail we may finally see his nature as a whole. And from childhood's pure hopes, wishes, and beliefs, we may, if we will, construct an ideal of humanity nobler than that which we now think great and good.



## From the Child's Standpoint

### The Real Home

I ONCE knew a man possessed of large means, the owner of a handsome residence in which nothing that a refined taste could wish seemed wanting, who always spoke of his dwelling as "the house." In fifteen years' acquaintance I never heard him utter the word "home" in connection with the abode of which he was master. Putting together certain details that were puzzling at the time, the reason of this curiously reserved attitude has occurred to me. The air of that house was garish, bald; everything was exposed to public view. What artists call "atmosphere," that soft film which seems to make a picture stand back enveloped in its surroundings, was lacking. Things of beauty were present, company was plentiful, and everything pertaining to bodily comfort was supplied without stint. But there was no soul in any of it. The whole house was like a ball-room; a place to riot in, to have a good time; but there was not a corner from attic to cellar where gentle in-

fluences seemed to dwell and that met the needs of one's higher nature. No wonder that its inmates merely stayed there, and that to the little children who grew up within its walls the word "home" never possessed any sweetness or sacred meaning.

A child's instinct in this matter, as in most, is true. He feels the presence or the absence of what ministers to happiness while yet he is, like the scholar smitten with word-dumbness, unable to express that of which he is so acutely aware. Some of us, however, have the power to recall our youthful mental experiences vividly in after-life when riper knowledge throws a new light upon them. It is through such candid self-analysis united with keen observation of living children that we come to find out what is of the most serious concern to them.

First of all, childhood is naturally honest ; the import of a fact lies in the fact itself, not in what other people think about it. If home is comfortable, if repose is to be found there, and if it affords a secure and sympathetic shelter for the little fancies, notions, and aspirations that bubble up continually in a child's heart, luxury is present so far as he is concerned. But stiffness, conventionality, and the arrangement of matters upon the basis of making a good appearance before the world chill his innocent, straightforward nature. Hardest,



sternest of lessons is this, that the house is managed with the view of pleasing strangers and that the best side is always to be turned outward, while no pains are taken to smooth and beautify the seamy side that is deemed good enough for the family. A child loves beauty; not elegance, style, nor that outward varnish which is like the artificial freshness of a worn-out actress, but real, genuine loveliness which is possessed of the first essential quality of beauty, namely, that it meets some want of one's nature. Ruskin maintained that no ornament was appropriate upon a lady's dress which did not serve some useful purpose. Thus, brooches are justified, while necklaces are barbaric.

So, the child and the genius meet upon the common ground of integrity. That thing is beautiful to him which is associated with pleasure. The stately drawing-room where he must keep his hands behind his back and walk upon tiptoe is as alien to his affections as the fine arts gallery or the cathedral, which excite admiration and awe but have no part in his real life. It is well enough to set aside some such altar for society if one has space to spare, and it may then be regarded as a thing apart. But how desolate is the atmosphere of a house where appearances are kept up throughout, and not a niche exists where one's own personality may expand and overflow freely.

It is not disorder that can create this congenial atmosphere ; it is the feeling of entire possession. Watch some little child enter the house with hasty step and quivering lip, and make way straight for the old lounge in the upper hall, which reached he throws his satchel of books down and burying his face in the familiar pillows sobs out his griefs and his disappointment into their motherly depths, rising comforted somehow by the feeling that if hardships assail him outside, here are peace, sympathy, and refuge.

The master of a mansion, desirous of repose, strides through the house to his smoking-den or dressing-room and there gets comfort from the sight of some dingy old object that has had ups and downs in his company and seems to understand his moods. The mistress shuts herself into her own room and gazes with filling eyes upon the flotsam that has come down from her old girlhood's home, and the dear association makes her feel less forlorn in that hour when all the riches refined taste has gathered together fail to ease her heart.

How human, then, to desire in a home those things congenial to one's self, and that we can centre our affections upon and feel easy with. The true home atmosphere exists where this blessed air of congeniality salutes one at the front door, not be-

ing confined to separate rooms but spreading throughout the whole house, and drawing one into communion with the other members of one's family. And this suggests the next point, which is that harmony, that delicious thing made up of agreement between different tempers, and accord and unity of aim and pursuit amongst the inmates, is as the pure air of heaven, where all that is best and happiest in child-nature can expand without limit. As the blast of Sahara upon a delicate rose is a storm of dissension between the father and mother in its effect upon the happy confidence of the child's heart. Let there be love in a home, and more than that, a confidential, cheery habit of intercourse. With this present, one poor room may be paradise, and without it—well, the child might as well stop shivering upon the door-step as enter in where the biting frost of unkind criticism and distrust, the cold temper of mutual dislike are in possession of the house.

But harmony presupposes a certain lack of egotism amongst the members of a family. No one must be wholly occupied with his own concerns or absorbed with his own development. Especially must the mother be, to a great extent, disengaged. If there is a being in the world who must, in order to fulfill her natural duties, care more for the happiness and welfare of others than her own, it is the

mother of a family. She is the centre of its life, the creator of its atmosphere. To her all look for sympathy, for comfort, for companionship. If she is wrapt up in pursuits that relate only to herself, and that are apart from the general interest, it is as if the sun, upon which humanity depends, should begin to absorb his own light and heat upon the plea of self-improvement. A woman standing side by side with her husband and among her children, living with them the life of highest culture, is a beautiful spectacle ; while the same woman immersed in affairs alien to theirs must be regarded as a deserter from duties she has engaged herself for, and her home viewed as a mere shell from which the living element has departed.

From the child's standpoint. We are looking at this matter as the straightforward, clear-eyed little one looks at it. To him home and motherhood are one idea. Whether the good genius be a mother in the flesh, an elder sister, or relative who has the supervision of the house, he craves of her that brooding, tender quality that spreads itself around him as a gentle shelter keeping off the harsh world.

This delicate care may, as I said, make a home out of an ugly room or a bleak tenement. It is atmosphere that childhood most wants; a kindly veil that separates its private life from the staring

public. But the ideal is to have the power of reservation extended. A house set out against a sidewalk must have very peculiar qualities within to render it individual in character. How quickly one's heart goes out to some pretty structure nestled back among trees, with grass and flowers as a foreground, and approached by a winding walk which seems to suggest that strangers are not easily admitted into the sanctuary beyond ! The passionate love of a child for a tree is something that not every one understands. If he is happy enough to own a yard and a tree nature is his foster-mother, and if orphaned elsewhere, he finds a home. Perhaps most of us would find, on looking back, that some of our happiest recollections cluster about a spot where trees, water, and grass made the beauty and pleasure of the scene.

And if we may not do more to meet the instinctive child-longing for Nature's companionship, let us give him a garden planted in a box. With seeds, roots, and earth he may persuade himself that he is a landowner. A living pet, too, is an important element of home life. There is such reality, such a suggestion of primitive, simple existence about the domestic animals, that they often comfort a child when the world becomes too hard for him to understand.

When Emerson protested against the irrationality of a "cachinnating human being," he surely did not mean to include the merry outburst of a child. It comes to me now, as I sit at my window, that sweet, high peal of irrepressible delight, accompanied by the clapping of tiny hands, and there is brought back to me, with a swift rush of memories, a time when one sweet little voice and one blithesome young spirit made music in a home that is quiet enough now, with the disturbing element of childish frolic and mischief gone—forever. "Strange we never miss the music till the sweet-voiced bird has flown." A thousand times within the first few happy years of a child's life we say "Hush," and in the long quiet years that come afterward we would give all we are worth to hear again the little voice we then stilled.

## Natural Religion

BENEATH the gross superstitions of savages are many poetical fancies, unsuspected even by themselves. Stripped of all the hideous ceremonies that appall the missionary, there is a great, broad, free sweep of the undisciplined imagination that catches from space a few of those wonderful outline pictures of faith from which educated minds shrink in affright. The concession made that only "fools rush in" hallowed places involves the condemnation of all the great religious reformers. Rather it is the timidity of angels which has permitted moss to grow on the pathway to heaven.

The children of nature, fierce and vicious in their conceptions of mutual relations among themselves, and cowardly in their abject worship of a deity supposed to be equally vicious, nevertheless strike straight through the clouds of doubt to the light beyond, in their innocent appropriation of the one great privilege that constitutes the whole of religious life—bold, frank intercourse with God. Their mode of carrying on this intercourse is usually ignoble, in rare cases singularly beautiful; the fire kindled in the damp bog and that lit on the clean

hillside send up respectively rolls of murky smoke and feathery gray flames, yet both roll upward, and the vital spark is beneath. That is the one important fact.

Whatever is young is in the stage of savagery, and along with lack of the virtues which come of refinement, possesses the primal virtue of faith. The children of our hearths watching the glow of dusky diamonds in the grate of burnished steel, neither see nor think of any of the processes of mining and hauling, of laying and igniting, that the luxurious house owner has commanded to be done : they see the clear forest flame, bask in the warmth, and seize from the gnome-figures that dance up the chimney that subtle something thrown from their flying wings which, like a dash of gold dust, glorifies all surroundings. And then their vivacious minds, having received the impetus, are off on a chase after the flying sprites, to the wild-wood, to caverns, mountain tops, and amidst clouds ; and there, uplifted above earthly fetters of doubt, they pursue their fearless inquiry into the unknown.

In the dusk of a fair autumn twilight the rising moon often peeps down on some little face pressed close against the glass, gazing out with all his heart in his eyes and sensing with an instinct as yet undulled, that great Presence mature, world-spoiled



minds vainly seek to find. "The sky is my religion," said once a sensitive, fanciful child, given to solitary musing. She used to watch, with fascinated attention, the play of light on the shifting clouds at sunset, and a wild storm filled her with delight because it gave her the feeling that the still Power always about her was become vigilant, active, alive.

The natural religion of childhood is simple faith in God. Before theologies confuse, and contradictory teachings depress their understanding, they hold innocent, happy communion with the life of the world as revealed in nature. The saturnine temperament has little need or desire for it, and yet, even to such is given some of this wonderful experience. A gleam of light, a touch of grace flits across the period, and what is due to youth comes to every soul that enters the world young, fresh, and impressionable. And so penetrating, so enduring is this influence that some remnant of it survives all the materialism that grows around our thoughts and opinions, as the years go by.

It is asserted, and it is one of those truisms no one can successfully dispute, because his own nature upholds it, that no man is really an atheist. Whatever he may declare, some memory, long since overgrown and seemingly dead, starts up with a soft whisper of that day in his early child-

hood when he looked with awe at the sea, the storm, or the sunset, and recognized the presence of God. This direct recognition comes only to the simple mind, whether it be lodged in the child or in the octogenarian. Whoever can discover the hilltop where the air celestial is whirled about as a circular wind which never rises nor descends far, is privileged to breathe the ether which for the time makes him more than human : whoever can see in a tree, a stone, a cloud, not these mere objects, but the spirit that lives in them and beyond them, knows the ecstasy of faith.

Men have made religions, but it was not in their power to either make or alter *religion* : that is something that exists only between the believer and its Deity. It is a matter of feeling, not of knowledge, and the sensitive child has more of it than his worldly parents. He may not care for catechisms, may pick flaws in his Sunday-school lessons, and fall out with his teacher about Old Testament history and New Testament miracles.

These are small matters, and modern society has the good sense to laugh at them. But the same young sceptic who satirically questioned the possibility of five thousand being fed by the five loaves and two fishes, will be thrilled by the whistled message the keen winter air brings him when he dances along the woodpath, and he will hold his

breath with awe as he passes some weird stump which uplifts skinny arms to the sky in posture of devout praise. Straight through the fortresses of words which the subtlety of man has erected around creeds the child dives to the great secret—God is life ; life is God. When the wind blows, stars twinkle, sap flows, or plants unfold their petals, he sees the manifestation of a supreme power. He believes without an instant's hesitancy that God sees him always ; is everywhere, within him and without ; but this power is protean, multiform ; it enwraps him and inspires him ; he belongs to it, and it to him.

This communion is broken into and demoralized by life experiences, and especially by over-zealous instructors to whom natural religion is less pure and beautiful than that which has been stamped by the sanction of a special father of the church. We cavil with the child over a trifling incident in the life of Joseph or of Job, and waste in mere discussion the divine trust in the truth and justice of the creative Power he unconsciously adores. Here, as everywhere, we think more of our own mechanical efforts than of the child's purity of heart. Neither evil nor virtue exists as knowledge within his mind, but as inclinations, which could never become concrete acts if circumstances, including tutors, did not rush eagerly to seek and enlighten

him. But if virtue involves knowing and choosing, faith has to do only with feeling. And here the child is superior to his master. In the daylight and in the dark glow ever-living reflections of the beautiful picture stamped on his soul in that indefinite past when it was part of the All-Soul and breathed the celestial breath of the upper air.

We give the child—words. Let us recollect that we can give him words only. There are in his inmost heart some exquisite beliefs that he may never be able to express, but that comfort and sustain him more than we are comforted by our rational, measured creeds. The world commits no grosser robbery than when it robs the pure, aspiring spirit of a child of its strangely simple, yet wildly imaginative pantheistic belief. It is the germ of the good, the true, the beautiful, for him, and if uncrushed, and with its delicate perfume preserved he carries it on into a period when intellectual convictions and knowledge of his humanitarian relations obtain their reasonable place in his mind, his life will be the brighter, the fuller, and the nobler, because of the sense of childlike trust that is the first and best gift to man.

As an only child, Daisy was much in the company of her parents and a lively young aunt who made one of the family, and she was so demure a little mite that they often forgot that she was present and spoke of things before her which they would not have chosen for her to hear. She was about seven years old when there began to come to the house a tall, neutral-tinted young man, to whom her bluff father took a dislike, speaking of him in privacy to her mother as a "stick," and even going so far as to wonder what interest Marian could have in "flirting with a stick." Daisy heard, and in her quiet way began to watch the visitor, but saw nothing to enlighten her as to what her father could mean until one evening as there was quite a company assembled in the parlor, her aunt Marian playfully took up a maulstick that lay on an easel, and, while she talked to her *soi-disant* admirer, balanced it on her finger. A light of intelligence came into pretty little Daisy's eyes, and, approaching the group, she said earnestly, "Oh, auntie, I know now what papa meant by your flirting with a stick; I didn't know before!" and she was greatly surprised at the fiery color which overspread the young man's face and at the hasty manner in which her aunt sent her off to bed.

## Honesty and Politeness

ALWAYS in a refined community there are some individuals who have a natural antagonism to manners. One child in a household of well-bred brothers and sisters may feel such a contempt for breeding as to cultivate its resentful opposite—brusqueness. Sincerity has often an unbending pride of its own, and insists upon pressing knobs against the flesh of those who love a cushiony surface.

Certain young persons, feeling vaguely a pervading discontent with an environment too gentle for their bold spirits, are made aware for the first time of what ails them when they open the pages of history. How they delight in the rough humor of Richard the lion-hearted, and how vehemently they approve the fearless barons, innocent of courtly graces and dealing forth bluff words like blows. They tolerate Bayard for his bravery, but think his French courtesy a little overdone, while they have no sympathy with the sacrifice of the gallant Raleigh's cloak. Imitating well-beloved Robin Hood

they indulge in a rough sort of protection toward the younger ones in school, and are happy if they can gain a reputation for "taking the part of the under dog in the fight." The old Saxon lawlessness peeps out in these sturdy young shoots. No banner gives such liberty as truth, and independent natures gravitate thereto without knowing how much their devotion is owing to the privilege of bearing arms against the entire world.

Few young people's heroines have ever had the success of Miss Alcott's "Jo." That rowdy damsel struck the warm chord of sympathy in thousands of little hearts rebellious against custom. She was one of the pioneers of the modern sentiment of girlish independence, which has grown in the last decade with mushroom rapidity. The existence of so lovable a rebel and free-thinker sanctioned the blunt speech which liberty-loving spirits are prone to indulge. Fastidious mothers are at a loss how to deal with the little daughters who take against social usages the high stand of honesty. Many a woman quails before the wide-open, innocent eyes that flash forth this righteous scorn, and feels herself hypocritical in the midst of her perplexed conviction that her child must be taught conformity.

Politeness—that exquisite politeness that breaks no rules, that carries itself as if society was a tender infant, to be soothed and humored—is a shield for

sensitive souls more invulnerable than the hide of Achilles. But those who need it most often oppose the protection it offers. They expose themselves to hurts, finding consolation in the idea that the persecution is "for righteousness sake"; that the world is false and grovelling and they the champions of truth.

What mistaken chivalry and false logic ! We would have these youthful scorers of social law turn to Emerson's essay on "Behavior," and there read what the white-souled prophet of truth, the incorruptible and unsparing critic of society, says about the necessity of even that fine and delicate polish which it might be supposed so great a mind would have ignored if it were possible for any to do so with impunity. "The power of manners," he admonishes, "is incessant—an element as unconcealable as fire. No man can resist their influence. There are certain manners which are learned in good society, of that force that if a person have them he or she must be considered, and is everywhere welcome, though without beauty, or wealth, or genius." We cannot understand this to mean that thin veneering of politeness with which minds naturally coarse glaze over their real indifference to the feelings of others. This is the "French polish" that cracks under exposure to atmospheric changes, not genuine breeding. Our young enthu-



siasts are so far right that truth is the basis of fine manners. But truth should be at rest, serene, secure in its own strength. Its time will come. Above all else the world wants this same truth, and some day it will turn to the silent one in the corner and beg for the secret whose possession is betrayed by the luminous brow and expressive eyes. Then the triumph is all with him. There is the surprise of finding him right, of seeing him strong, and after this he is courted. I have seen a great statesman leave his side of the table and come around to talk to a modest little maiden of ten, drawn solely by the silent charm of the child's manner.

Society tolerates popinjays in the same way that it applauds the comic opera. These fools only amuse ; they are the toys of the hour and flung away when done with. But what it loves is power, and no other quality can successfully simulate it. The one unmistakable evidence of power is repose. This is so sure that he who has that gracious aspect is accused of concealing rare accomplishments under a quiet exterior. *Some* force there must be in the individual, or he cannot achieve a good manner. If he has no talent he must have a belief, a great affection; anything sufficient to lift him out of personal pettiness.

Personalities are an instant admission of inferiority. For this reason a child should be taught first

of all not to talk of himself. Let him know that reserve inspires respect, and that in relating family history he is doing the thing of all others he would least wish to do—cheapening his position. But to put it so that a child can understand, we should say that the affairs of a household are a sacred trust with its members, and that his own actions only concern an outsider at the point where they touch him. Children are not born gossips. They report what they see and hear of people only when encouraged. They would far rather talk of the cat, the birds, the flowers, and the museum, if left to their free choice. But it is essential that they know when to talk and when to be silent, and this is hardest of all. The old rule, "Speak when spoken to," has the great defect that it kills grace. A suppressed child makes a stiff man or woman.

Much of the ungainliness of bearing which constitutes a stumbling-block to many admirable men and women is the result of an autocratic government which constrained them, as children, to be passive and inanimate in the presence of their elders. As a witty writer observes, "their animal spirits were flat-ironed out of them." One may emerge from this discipline with an irritable bearing which gives every expression an appearance of insistence, as if the person said to himself: "I have a right and this time I will be heard." It is better to im-

press upon the child that he may speak freely whenever he has anything interesting to say to the company, but, if he finds that he is wearying others, to stop. If his fact or fancy has any value there is some one who will like to hear it some time. Let him study to be opportune, for that is the secret of tact.

It is a pity that the majority of our young people divide into these two classes: they are either noisy or stiff. Both are signs of selfishness ; the one permitted expression, the other restrained through pride. The one divine power possessed by mortals is love. Every one who has achieved any sort of influence over mankind has either been actuated by some form of love, or has pretended to be. Social leaders have this for the first principle of their creed. They assume an interest in you, and courteously put themselves in the background. Who has not at some time in his life been charmed by that delicious look of interest, that cordial, welcoming touch of the hand which subtly conveyed the impression that he was of consequence in discriminating eyes ? One such momentary meeting is recollected with pleasure throughout years. This may be counterfeit, but the virtue of it is that it appears real.

And real love—human, brotherly feeling—is what the world wants. The fiat is that if you have

it not you must simulate it. We are not to make our children deceitful. Their guileless hearts only need be encouraged to love. They have as a birthright the essence of the most exquisite courtesy. What they need is to be trained how to express it. Let us be sure that we ourselves know that which we essay to teach them. Some children are deliberately trained to be awkward and uncouth by being made self-conscious through incessant admonition.

Awkwardness is a social crime; so black a crime that there is a temptation to call it a moral enormity. If to please is a virtue then smooth motions, graceful postures, musical tones, are accomplishments to be conscientiously acquired. We are doing more for our son than his Latin tutor does when we teach him to enter and leave a room well, and to sit at ease among our guests. What a wealth of learning that girl will need to compensate for her awkwardness, if she cannot open her lips without startling the nerves of the company, or move over the floor without upsetting something in her path. If she had any appreciation of the beautiful harmonies under which Nature conceals her most powerful operations, she would know that to be abrupt is to be weak; that uncouthness and insignificance are twins. Let us, then, teach our children smoothness ; how to join one movement to

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another ; how to lead from topic to topic ; how to be graceful, gentle, and self-possessed. Develop in them the desire to please, and all the minor social virtues will the more readily follow.

✓ Childhood is the proper time of life for experimenting. Later, we must apply our energies to some one purpose. Therefore, let us encourage children to try to do new things, so that they may learn both what they are able and what they like best to do.

## The Choice of a Life Pursuit

AN opinion is gradually gaining ground among experienced parents that the period of school education is too prolonged. Their sons, they say, leave college at about the age of twenty-five, learned students perhaps, but so far as practical knowledge of life is concerned, or preparation for any business, as ignorant as children. And at this age they have, in a measure, lost their adaptability, so that the choice of a pursuit is made with more than a little trouble; and finally, when made, it involves a special course of preparation which postpones the productive period far into the future.

It is certainly far from my design to advocate the curtailing of education. But why should college training, or any sort of schooling, lead away from the business of life? It ought, on the contrary, to conduct towards it. Instead of dissipating the energies of a boy and unfitting him for a career, a proper education should be a perfect equipment for some special pursuit.

But here we touch the heart of the matter. How can there be preparation for something which is vague and indefinite? It is impossible to select at

random some occupation for a child and bend our efforts toward unfolding the special faculties it will involve, with any certainty that his character, when developed, will justify our choice. In fact, a just parent doubts very much whether he has a right to impose a calling upon his son, who may thereafter betray a decided aversion to and unfitness for it.

The usual idea has been to supply a broad and general culture and postpone specific training until later. But it is to be remarked that in the great majority of instances the successful men of the world have been those who in early years embraced a special pursuit, from which they never afterwards departed ; while the men who make their choice of occupation at a late period are very apt to be guided by circumstances, probably by immediate necessities, rather than by their peculiar talents. They “ drift ” into situations, and many a career is spoiled, many a life dwarfed and narrowed by this haphazard method of settling into an occupation.

The undesirability of either choosing an occupation for our son, early in life, or of permitting him to grow to manhood without having selected one, leaves us but one course, and this the most natural one of any; we ought to consider it a plain duty, to aid him in the development of his own powers, so that any strong taste he evinces may serve as



the clue to his training. The perfunctory way of settling a son's destiny by devoting him to a pursuit his parents have a preference for is not popular with modern parents, although still followed by some nations. Dickens' two indolent, good-for-naught characters, Mortimer Lightwood and Eugene Wrayburn, in accounting for their failures, observe to one another that the reason they are in their present box is because their lives were arranged for them. "My respected father," remarks Wrayburn, "put me to the study of the law because it was understood that they wanted a barrister in the family—and they have got a precious one." Certain parents are so bent upon possessing in the family talent of a certain order that they twist every indication of capacity into something that confirms their wish. This is more injurious to a child than neglect. If we cannot aid his development, we should at least do what we can not to hinder it.

There are exceptional natures which show at an early age one decided inclination which points unmistakably to a particular pursuit. All we have to do in these cases is to defer to our child's talent, and put him in the way of developing it. But ordinarily, the children even of talented parents are undecided in their tastes, and either devote themselves to one thing after another, and with equal

ardor, or show listlessness concerning everything. And the years pass in the aimless acquisition of book-lore.

There is much to be said in favor of the early choice of an occupation over what is usually termed a complete education. Where a boy is reared to some special pursuit there is a concentration of energies otherwise dissipated. Without burdening him prematurely with a sense of responsibility it is well to encourage him to think about the matter and learn to know himself and find out what he is fitted for. An intelligent, disinterested parent who studies his child from infancy with a view to right training, will seldom fail to find signs to guide him. And the boy whose mind has fixed itself upon a definite aim has thenceforth an anchor to stay him amidst all the temptations to indolence. Work for a purpose is worth something, and the only sort that has a permanent hold upon us.

The belief so prevalent even as late as fifty years ago, that it mattered very little what sort of business a man gave his attention to, so that he *gave* it, has been displaced at length by a more correct view of the decisive nature of propensity. Dr. Johnson's view was that a true genius is a man of large general powers accidentally determined to a particular direction. But if, as Macaulay observed, "happiness is the free exercise of the mind in pur-

suits congenial to it," there is a great waste of nervous energy in the forcible application of the mind to a business that contains no element of enjoyment. A large portion of life is spent in work, and it is dooming the worker to a vast amount of at least negative misery to bind him to what he is not naturally drawn toward.

For this reason we should hesitate to urge upon a young man or woman a career from motives of mere expediency; especially if there is a strong desire present for some other pursuit. Any honest work that there is a liking for should have the preference over all other sorts, even if they are more distinguished or promise more advantage. For what the worker's heart is in he will do well. And if he is so happily constituted that he can make himself enthusiastic in a vocation he was originally disinclined toward, we may be sure that the quality of enthusiasm would have been so much magnified in something answering to his native bias as to have carried him to a greater measure of success.

The excessive strain endured by men in the competition of business would be less if there was not a long and steady wear upon their powers of endurance to tell against them in a crisis. If every morning there is a slight struggle to settle down to labors that are distasteful, the end of the year

would reveal, if we could read the record of the mind, a marked depletion of the vital forces. It is through overcoming difficulties that we grow strong, but it is not through overcoming instincts of dislike. Unpleasant details are lightly vaulted by the spirit which is buoyed up by the sense of a great pleasure in the work as a whole.

Children are apt to classify unfamiliar articles after an odd fashion. For instance, a little boy of two years was introduced to a farm where there was a black dog running about in the barn-yard among the chickens, most of which were white. He looked in the hens' nests and took notes, silently pondering many things. On coming into the house his attention was drawn to a black "darning egg" in his mother's work-basket, and with his eyes glowing with astonishment he cried, "Oh, mamma, is that a bow-wop's (dog's) egg?"

## The City Child in the Country

AMONG the many families who take their summer vacation at watering-places, more or less fashionable and expensive, there are some who seek out quiet and unfrequented country spots where they may be at ease and somewhat exclusive. Parents who wish to give their children a chance to relax and recuperate from school restraints do well to take them into the "real country" where there are not only hills and meadows and woods, but cows, chickens, wild pigeons and squirrels, and all the myriad creatures that live close to nature's heart.

Life will be a frolic while they dwell with their humbler kindred and get on terms of intimacy with the sly creatures that hide in wood and stream. What baby that can toddle out to a sand heap and scoop it up with his tiny fingers was ever known to fret? Or what child teases its mother, that has learned the way to the barn and is allowed to ride on the haymow and to feed the chickens? Especially blessed privilege to city children, who realize then, if never before, the pleasure of self-reliance and of helpfulness, and the charm of out-door life.

But with these advantages there is another opportunity of some importance, that is apt to be forgotten. There are many more sorts of knowledge and virtue that any one person is acquainted with, and yet we usually exhibit little desire to cultivate what lies outside of our daily experience. A person to be much esteemed must wear our kind of clothes and know the thing we have studied. Otherwise we have no use for him. Yet common sense ought to teach us to seek rather for usefulness, the person who is unlike ourselves.

The man who goes to Paris and lives in the midst of a little community of his American acquaintances, talking over at night the oddities of the Frenchmen he has been casually thrown with during the day, and ending with the self-gratulation that he is not as they, profits little by his trip. He might as well have sat by his own fireside and read Hamerton's criticisms upon our transatlantic cousins. To gain something he should have aimed to enter into their lives and habits, to have assimilated with them and tried to penetrate their point of view. So do all the wise and curious explorers to strange countries. And the result of their travel is the infusion of new blood and vitality into their brains ; it is like doubling one's personality. Narrow minds are always consciously and intentionally exclusive ; their fear of contact with strangers

shows that they have a weak hold upon what they claim as their own; they may be dispossessed.

But there is another sort of exclusiveness which is not voluntary nor self-conscious ; it is the reserve of a fine nature which keeps its pearls in their deep casket until a connoisseur happens by, and then reveals them with frank confidence. And such a nature, not needing guards because no one can rob him, loves to find points of contact between himself and his fellows, and when with them enters into their feelings and thoughts and shares their experiences as far as he may, that he may be the wiser. Nor does he scorn to share his own, for he feels that his larger opportunities confer an obligation upon him to enlarge the mental scope and increase the charm for happiness of all who have been less privileged.

How speedily a single grain of good feeling demolishes false social barriers ! There are enough, God wot, that no effort can demolish and that must wait the slow action of centuries. This spontaneous feeling of an unspoiled child leads him straight over the hedges our conventional prejudices erect for him. And before stopping that flight which is the outcome of a kind and true impulse we had better consider whether even policy is not on his side. In the matter suggested, of his summer vacation in the country, there occurs the pos-



sibility of his intercourse with his unknown country cousins—cousins upon the ground of our common humanity, not in blood.

The farmers' little children who run about in the rear yards, barefooted and ragged perhaps, since their mothers are making pies for boarders instead of mending clothes, are looked upon very often by these city boarders as barbarians who are to be avoided by their own carefully clad and more prettily appearing children. But may it not be that these despised young people hold certain treasures of knowledge and experience which the city-bred children would be greatly benefited by sharing? Who know better than they, the haunts of squirrel and wild fowl, the ways of insects, and the wiles of the wary fish? Who can discriminate so readily between the poisonous plant and the harmless wild flower, or lead the way to the prettiest and most secret haunts in the woods? And more than this, they can give lessons in endurance, simplicity, and enterprise; their harder lives have taught them self-dependence and resource, and those little brown hands can row a boat over the tossing waves of the bay, and those bare feet find a safe route through prickly pine and jagged stones, without fear or hesitancy.

These are things worth knowing how to do, and it is worth while for our book-learned boys and

girls to toss on old straw hats and common shoes—if they must wear shoes—and follow country John and Mary over the farm and into the pine groves, listening with attention to what they have to tell about the strange, new things which are every-day matters to them. These are object-lessons, the value of which we cannot calculate, although we can greatly increase it by talking over with the children their interesting experiences, examining the treasures they will be sure to bring in, and giving, in a few happy words, a scientific classification to their miscellaneous collection. The chances are that in a short time they will have gone beyond us, and know more than we do, unless we make an effort to keep ahead. But while we are profiting by the kindness of our little country friends, let us not forget that we owe them something in return. Airs of superiority, ill at any time, are most ungrateful here. As they frankly take us into their lives, let us as frankly reciprocate. What can we do for them?

To the farmers' children who receive for the first time a family from the city, their guests are objects of curiosity and a little awe. They shyly hang about watching their coming and going and gazing at their pretty clothes and paraphernalia, waiting meanwhile for that significant word or look which shall give the indelible stamp to their rank, and

either confirm liking or inspire dislike. They are conscious of that indefinable atmosphere city-bred people carry with them, and with true American respect for knowledge are quite ready to admire and imitate their guests wherever they shall show themselves superior.

No one appreciates a polished manner and gentle bearing more than the rustic child, but his perception is keen as Ithuriel's spear to detect the true from the false, and patronage is an intolerable affront. He craves the favor and friendship of cultivated minds, but cannot buy it at the sacrifice of his sturdy self-respect. Neither will he esteem the person who is so unwise as to relax from his natural dignity into rude joviality and condescending fellowship. Many people make this mistake. This is cheating our country friends out of the advantages they have a right to expect from intercourse with us, and showing them the cheap glitter of pinchbeck instead of the jewel's lustre of good-breeding. That is what they want—the inspiration of our broader knowledge and the example of our more cultivated speech and manner; not given in the pedagogical spirit, but as a fair exchange for their own homely but as valuable lore.

But alas ! a good heart cannot be bought at the outfitters' shop along with lawn-tennis shirts and shoes, and to the traveller who has that already

these suggestions will convey nothing new. Yet it will be well to impress upon our children that while they go into the country to "rough it" for awhile, they are not to become "roughs"; that they are not to lay aside their good manners, nor to fall into slipshod habits that will dishonor their up-bringing quite as much in the eyes of their country critics as in those of their drawing-room friends.

We should try to teach them that equality and brotherhood do not consist in laying aside differences, but in forgetting that they exist. For in the natural and acquired differences between persons lie great opportunities of mutual advantage. How delightful human intercourse would become if each one, without losing hold of the light and knowledge peculiar to his own experience, did full justice to the light and knowledge of others! We can begin this with our children by encouraging them in sympathy, consideration, and simplicity in their treatment of all their chance companions.

The unselfish parent is rarely cursed with hard-hearted children, and in a household where love presides there will be thoughtfulness for the poor. A happy child is usually full of pity and solicitude for his wretched brothers of the street, and with a little encouragement he readily forms a habit of setting apart some of his provision for them. Alas ! that we should call such kindness charity; in a future age it will be a necessity of our peace and comfort to have contributed toward the welfare of those whose moral right to the happiness we enjoy is not less than our own. A true-hearted child feels this; he is not naturally a monopolist, and until his feelings become blunted he thinks it only just that he should aid in making happiness for others. But while we encourage generosity, it will be well to refrain from directing it. Free will must lie at the basis of all worthy effort. ]

## Happiness and Duty

It will help us very much in the moral culture of our children to analyze in ourselves the reasons for our own choice of conduct. Probably it will be found upon honest scrutiny, that we are in general led to do things because it was advisable, expedient to do them, because by doing them more enjoyment would come to us in the long run than if we did something else. The first impelling motive to any act is pleasure; there never could have been any growth if this were not so. Afterwards it may be made habitual from various reasons ; duty, beneficence, profit are all of avail, but they are rather the chains that bind us to certain courses than the flowery fragrance that attracted us toward them.

Many habits have become fixed in us by the time we are grown and we forget how we were led to acquire them. But upon looking back it certainly will appear that those habits that have adhered to us were associated in the beginning with some sort of pleasure, either inherent in the act itself or coming as a reward for performing it. Whatever we were made to do, with pain and discomfort to ourselves, is obnoxious to us in our maturer years, and when

we become our own law-givers we abandon all such ways and choose others more congenial and that lead to more pleasing results.

If this has been the course of our development we may expect it to be the same with our children. From all our precepts and teaching an instinctive selection will be made of the most agreeable, and these will have a thousandfold more influence and weight than all the rest. It is, as some one observes, easy as down-hill walking to persuade people to do what they like to do. But why do they like certain things more than others, except because the first performance of them was in some way made agreeable ?

Says Professor James: " In the acquisition of a new habit, we must take care to launch ourselves with as strong an initiative as possible;" and what is stronger than enjoyment ? Here we have the great secret of good government : make the first performance of every act which it is desirable to establish as a habit in the child's life, agreeable to him. Our authority is given us that we may impel the child while he is yet flexible and docile, toward the course of conduct that will be beneficial in his maturity, and we ought to bend most of our energy toward working for what will be permanent with him. Many matters that we are most zealous about are affairs of the moment, affecting him only

for the hour, and ourselves more than him. We waste a great deal of strength in training him in knowledge that he will throw off the instant he is his own master. And yet these early years that are so precious are also so few that they scarcely suffice for laying the basis for his true and essential after-education.

To prevent evil acts the attention must be directed toward right acts. The authority that contents itself with being merely preventive is practically useless. If life is at one period made a matter of negation it will be riotously positive when the individual is freed from restraint. The boy and girl who have been brought up on a diet of "don't" will have a fierce appetite for their own way merely because their fund of energy has been suppressed and is bound to exert itself when it becomes possible. And this self-will, for being vehement, will be the less judicious. But if from infancy there has been permitted a proper play of energy and excellent qualities have been developed through the free and joyous performance of right acts, the character will have attained an equipoise that makes it able easily to resist the temptation to every sort of excess. Duty that has never been made disagreeable is attractive enough to rival dissipations.

But some specific application of a general rule is usually necessary to make its value apparent. Take,



then, the instance of hospitality; and let us consider how best to imbue our children with a feeling which is not only necessary to harmony in our homes while they are little, but to their social welfare throughout their lives. Both for their sakes and our own we wish them to be polite toward our guests, to be able to make themselves agreeable and even entertaining, for nothing is more delightful than a little child playing gracefully the part of host or hostess. It is hardly to be expected that before they have conceived any idea of the obligation resting upon them they will heartily enter into the duty of hospitality. And to enforce this upon them in the beginning as a duty, is to arouse a dislike for it. A certain gentleman, whose wife was notably hospitable, gave her, during their wedded lives, extreme pain by his churlishness toward guests. He was never able to overcome his dislike of company through an ineffaceable impression made in his childhood by the horde of hungry ministers who were wont to troop to his father's table and usurp the children's places and share of good things. His politeness always bore a tinge of reminiscent distrust.

We must feel our way daintily to a child's understanding and not shock him at the first approach. A situation must be brought down to his level before he can enter into it. What joy it is to a little

creature to live at the first in a little world; to have scenes presented to him in miniature and learn ethics through his relations with other creatures that are little like himself. We have learned our duties toward men and women in just such ways as these, and the virtues and graces we possess were gained through the exercise of very trivial impulses.

If we are graciously hospitable it is because we have come to associate pleasure to ourselves with hospitality. Why not direct the development of our children through these natural channels? They like to have their playmates come to their houses, and in the education of this impulse lies our great opportunity for training them in politeness, forbearance, generosity, and all the social virtues. They will easily carry into their intercourse with older persons the habits they have acquired naturally and with pleasure. But it is the height of tyranny to expect a child to be felicitous in his treatment of our guests if he has not had the happiness of entertaining company of his own. If he is not pleased his politeness will soon break down, for a child's manners always show the condition of his heart beneath the varnish of breeding.

Women who are lacking in self-control are given to complaining to their children about their troubles. They make confidants of them and introduce them prematurely to a realm of care and perplexity. A child is so sympathetic and impressible that he offers a tempting field for the exploiting of little miseries. But he does not come through the experience unhurt. The delicate sensibilities of children are like the tender and exquisite arbutus, which gives forth the sweetest fragrance when it is being crushed to death. We recall an instance where a weak mother, always in pecuniary difficulties through her extravagance, formed the habit of disburdening herself to her little son, a sedate, earnest lad of ten. He was so deeply affected by the knowledge of her trouble that it preyed upon him constantly, and his great dream was to do something to relieve his mother from her debts. His whole early life was clouded and made unhappy by this indiscreet demand upon his sympathies.

## The Dear World of Fancy

MODERN life is the life of the mind and senses; it demands tangible facts, things it can handle and put to a definite use. Once in a while some backslider from the utilitarian philosophy puts forth a weak plea for more poetry, more leisure, more of that sheen of the imagination which used to light up the dark places in our path before our garish electric burners made the moon obsolete. It may be that this elderly renegade, sitting some evening with his slippers on the fender and gazing at his bright coal fire, feels a stir of those torpid nerves which used to thrill sweetly to the touch of fancies now quite forgotten. And the flurry and fume of this closing nineteenth century seem to him a narrowing process, a "closing in" of human nature away from beauty and grace and imagination, and a bartering of the soul's freedom for the security of co-operative existence. Yet, where is there any room, where any time, for those jaunts into cloudland in which Old Leisure used to delight? Balloons and flying-machines crowd the thoroughfare to the stars, and a logical explanation of all the charming mysteries that once held

simpler minds captive, now gives vigor to the scorn of our more enlightened understandings.

But realism has no advocates among the children. As they are compelled to drop, one by one, the pretty illusions and fancies of infancy, they feel that they are making an enforced journey away from a pleasant land warm with sunlight, sweet with flowers, into some bleak region where everything is cold, formal, and ugly. "Mamma," says a coaxing little voice, "there *are* fairies, aren't there?" What wistfulness and pathos in the tone! Perchance the little one espies, away in the distance, an arid tract toward which his reluctant steps are tending, where bricks and mortar take the place of mossy rocks and fern-covered hollows, and the once silvery voices of his airy playfellows have shrunk altogether out of hearing and their lovely forms out of sight. Dear world of fancy! There the child, with his pure heart and simple ideas, is at home; he is king amongst the elves and life is a holiday of mirth and frolic.

But "the old order changeth, giving place to new." The fairies with their garments woven of moonbeams, their dances on midsummer eve, their knightly tournaments and magic wands, have given way to the practical Brownie who travels, in approved tourist style, with knapsack and wallet and a critical air. He scorns the woods and the

untrodden places barren of a network of railway, and visits only cities of wealth and modern conveniences. Our children, bereaved of their fairies and giants, have adopted the Brownies, *en masse*.

The humor of Palmer Cox's brilliant creation chimes in precisely with the tendency of the American mind. There is something clear-cut, satisfying, conclusive. The child mind seizes it with avidity and goes into fits of enjoyment over the recital of impish wit. Yet, it is a question whether this materialization of youth's cobweb fancies is wholly gratifying. The great advantage of poetry and romance is that it takes us out of familiar and monotonous surroundings and rests and refreshes by suggesting something beyond the reach of our experience. Children especially need this variety, for there is a riotous element in them that rushes away from the dry details of actual life to claim kinship with that unseen presence that manifests itself to them as positively as heat and cold, houses and money manifest themselves to our minds.

There is no fear but the coming generation will be practical enough. Why force them to it prematurely? By a curious contradiction a nation which prides itself upon its common sense laments the absence of poets. It is not that material for an epic is lacking, but that the true poetic spirit has been almost brow-beaten out of existence. Our as-

siduous training of little children, our substitution of formal plays, with "a moral in them," has undoubtedly done much to crush spontaneity. Excellent as the kindergarten methods are, some interpreters of the wise and kind Froebel go too far in their efforts to direct the children's fancies. The mutual confidence between a sympathetic young teacher and her affectionate pupils is beautiful to see, but let her not suppose that she, or any other creature, can completely enter into that sanctuary of the child's soul where fancy dwells. He should have room for those gauzy wings to flutter about and soar off alone, not to be followed by his most intimate friend.

There are certain old plays, certain old songs which are traditionary among the children. How they are preserved from one generation to another it would be hard to tell, for we never find a grown person teaching them. But most of us can look back to "days of yore" when we wore hoods and "tippets" and little shawls, and went out in front of our houses at sundown to meet our comrades and join hands in a ring, and murmur shyly, half afraid lest some profane listener should penetrate our thoughts, old melodies about "London Bridge" and "Thus the farmer," and others. And there was a certain charm in the secrecy and the aloofness from the grown-up world. A natural



child is very shy, and when he is not shy be sure he has lost the grace of a rich imagination. It is a deplorable loss for which no material advantage in after life can compensate.

The careful educators who are cutting down the classics to fit the youthful understanding should recollect to leave something for them to reach forward to. That which is a little beyond us is a stimulant and an inspiration. Probably the bookish youngsters who read Shakespeare and Spenser before they were a dozen years old comprehended only a moiety of what their eyes rested upon, yet because the true and the beautiful is always simple, the atmosphere even of pre-eminent genius was not so rarified to them but they could delight in it and breathe it over again, years after, in memories that were sweet and precious. And so, it seems good that science and mathematics should not drive away romance from the lives of the young. Laboulaye and the "Arabian Nights" have been the solace of many wounded little hearts, and the giants and fairies that people the nurseries at night when grown-folks are out of the way, have, perchance, a more soothing influence than all the didactical passages in the "children's corner" of current literature.



"Variety is the spice of life" to grown people, but it is sugar and honey to children. They feel dulness and monotony more than their elders because they are far more dependent upon what is objective. Movement is necessary to them, a stir and excitement grateful. A certain little boy always danced when he heard eggs beaten or the chopping-knife in operation, liking the rhythm of sound which broke into the quietude of the house. Children are fond of seeing something going on and would rather open the door to a tramp than to have no one come up the steps. "Oh, if something would only happen!" prayed a small maiden suffering from a real case of severe *ennui* which would have been recognized in her mother. Children need recreation because while their bodies are growing their nervous system is tender and excitable. If denied amusement they sometimes have a touch of genuine hysteria, the result of morbid blood.

## Holly and Mistletoe

HOLIDAY keeping is one of the excellent customs that we ought never to let pass away from us. The times are never bad enough to justify us in starving our natural instinct for enjoyment. When living becomes wholly a matter of routine we may be sure that some of our nerves are dead, for indifference is the mind's way of putting on mourning. It is not indispensable to holiday keeping that we be lavish of money ; the great charm is in making it distinctive, in having the thing on that day that belongs to it alone. There is a felicity in the Christmas tree, the Fourth-of-July fireworks, the picnic on May-day. The well-balanced mind loves rhythm and hails the recurrence of familiar pleasures.

It is a cruel perversion of human rights that there should be a monopoly at any time upon merrymaking; festivals have their own laws, and should level social barriers. In the South the old negro who cannot buy his Christmas turkey borrows one from a neighbor's full barnyard and "bresses de Lord" in all simplicity. As our morals

improve, our thankfulness diminishes. It may be right that we should endure misery, but some one has done wrong when we have it to endure.

And some one has done very wrong when children are miserable, even in the negative form of not being happy. It takes little to make any child happy, if we but understand that, while the young creature seems to be all body, he is in reality nearly all mind. He can be made happy for a whole year merely in the anticipation of a single day. Is not that a cheap purchase of bliss? But it is exacted of us that we, the lawmakers and festival makers, be perfectly honest with him; that we promise nothing that we cannot perform, and then that we perform what we have promised, though it should draw forked lightning upon our heads.

There is no great risk, unless common sense is lacking. What is any festival to a child? It is what he remembers it to have been; his delighted expectations reflect past pleasures. Were his Christmas always only a green wreath on the wall of his hut and a gilt horn of sugar-plums in his stocking, these poor things were enough to set the day apart and furnish material for many day-dreams. But it is wretchedness unspeakable to a child to have had a happy holiday one year and be bereft of it the next year, or even to be uncertain about its recurrence. Uncertainty is to the youth-

ful mind *anguish*, while a sure and definite enjoyment, however small, is material from which hope and faith construct the fabric of happiness.

If I were asked to describe the one feature of Christmas which seemed the distinguishing mark of the day, I should unhesitatingly say, on looking back through the vista of years upon a happy childhood, that it was evergreens. Well do I remember the pilgrimage to the market, the bringing home a great basket of trailing "crowfoot," glowing holly, and delicate mistletoe, and the joyous embellishing of pictures, mantels, and door-frames until the house looked like a miniature forest. Then the tree! Ah, do not think, when you resolve to dispense for the first time with this troublesome appendage, that you are only asking your children to give up *a tree*. You are asking them to relinquish the very spirit of Christmas, the romance, the poetry, the embodiment of all their youthful sentiment. This is to say—if they have come to associate a tree with Christmas. It would be the same if it were a stocking, a plum-cake, a cornucopia. Question any child who has been so blessed as to have had the experience, and you will find that some one thing is predominant with him in the making of the holiday. And this one association it is his inalienable right to preserve.

We trample relentlessly on a child's native

sources of happiness when we take from him his dear associations. There is no substitute, because happiness is wrought not from material things, but of feelings. This being so, perhaps the best thing we can do for our children upon holidays is to give them ourselves ; the best part of ourselves, our sympathy, our high spirits, our generous, enthusiastic affection. The parent who creates this joyous atmosphere in his home, and contributes from his own nature the elements of "a good time," need fear no reverses of fortune nor deprivation. He is the holiday incarnate, and his company outrivals the attractions of Alexander's feast, in the opinion of his youthful comrades.

The day will come when our little ones, grown to manhood and womanhood, and saddened perhaps by inroads death has made in the home circle, will look back with feelings of purest pleasure to these happy family gatherings when great and small frolicked in company, and the bond of affection was drawn warm and close about hearts time has withered and separated. Some wise man once advised : "Lay up in youth a store of pleasant memories." Indeed, there is no better safeguard against loneliness and despondency than a little stock of fair, sweet pictures to look upon, and those of us who are able at will to conjure up pleasant and cheerful bygone scenes are shielded,

as by a guardian angel, from many of the disappointments and griefs of life.

The duty of making children happy is one not always recognized. Often we confuse it with the idea of indulgence and laxity of government; but while liberty is delightful, license or defiance of law and order brings its own punishment. We need not remove wholesome and proper restraint in order to give a child the full flavor of enjoyment, for this is to encourage the false notion that enjoyment is more or less incompatible with good conduct. Neither need we, on the other hand, precede every holiday with a lecture, as an ultra-conscientious governess who had the charge of my younger days used to do. There is a happy medium, and it may well be expressed in the simple rule: Make the enjoyment of the child dependent upon the enjoyment of others. Let him take part in the preparations as well as in the results.

There is almost always a graceful response upon the part of a child when appeal is made to him to help in the getting ready for company, or for little feasts in honor of some one he cares for. And it is not solely because the bustle is pleasant, and the sight of dainties for the table congenial; no, the feeling that he has the power of contributing to the happiness of others brings real delight to the little heart which is sometimes weighted down with a

sense of insignificance, and of having no part in the affairs of the world; a fancy that would be touching if it were understood.

“In the heart of winter’s snow, Christmas fires glow.” Out of the past this phrase from an almost forgotten poem comes back to me, and brings with it a gleam of the cheerful anticipation with which, as a little child, I used to look forward to the great day of the year. Children who have not been too early initiated in those pleasures that belong by right to mature life, and whose natures have been kept fresh and simple, enjoy the holidays that are appropriate to them with a zest and heartiness of which the poor little sated palates of infant worldlings are incapable.

If for no other reason than to secure them the greatest amount of happiness at those times when they naturally expect to be made particularly happy, we ought to accustom our children to be content ordinarily with simple pleasures. How can the child who goes to parties frequently, to whom the theatre is a familiar dissipation, and who has dainties and toys whenever he calls for them, experience any of the ecstasy over Christmas which the unsophisticated little one feels who tastes candy and plum pudding only as a rare treat, and to whom the pantomime is an unexplored world of wonders?

Anticipation constitutes a large part of the enjoyment of youth, and when there is a prospect of pleasure which may certainly be depended upon, and that is not contingent upon the good-will or the caprices of others, children sip daily and hourly for a long time beforehand the delights of possession. This habit of childhood of dwelling upon joys to come ought not to be frowned down and discouraged by the elders who have outlived their own enthusiasm and who have come to believe happiness a delusive and transitory thing.

What if we know that there is more evil than good in most lives, that things seldom turn out as well as they promise and that there is a drop of bitterness in the bottom of each cup of sweet, need we therefore take from buoyant and hopeful childhood its truest and deepest joy, belief and confidence in the future? Rather let us try to sympathize with their mood, and rejoice and hope with them. It will do them a great deal of good, and perhaps do ourselves good, too. It is well sometimes to be simple and truthful rather than wise, and if, as one of our greatest preachers taught, it is possible by right relations with others to establish a heaven here upon earth, such an application might be made of the mystically beautiful warning of Christ: "Unless ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."



Christmas is not a time for selfish enjoyment—if there is ever any real enjoyment where selfishness is present. It is above all the season of thoughtfulness for others, of giving, of love and kindness and the play of social feeling. A true-hearted child looks forward as happily to the pleasure he is to bestow as to that he expects to receive. He prepares with a secrecy ever upon the point of bursting out, little remembrances for father and mother, brothers and sisters and friends, and saves up his pocket-money that he may lavishly dispense it upon odd (and sometimes pathetically inappropriate) gifts. To be penniless and helpless at Christmas time is a grief the young can feel as well as the old, and with scarce less keenness.

And this is one reason why, despite all the excellent reasons that can be adduced upon the other side, I advocate providing children with a regular allowance of pocket-money, and teaching them from an early age how to make purchases. To save for the sake of giving is an education in generosity and in that care-taking for others which is so essential an element of later life. Let the little ones save up their pennies to spend when the time comes, and then, with blithe hearts and liberal intentions, they will “go Christmasing” on their own account and learn to take part in the general effort to promote the happiness of the season.

And a word must be said on behalf of the elder young persons in the family—those who are no longer children, yet have not outgrown, despite their pretence of sedateness, the childish liking for indulgence and good times. We are apt to think chiefly of the little ones who clamor of their affairs, and neglect the needs of the shy and silent half-grown boys and girls who have not ~~some~~ much to say for themselves. And yet they, especially, ought to be drawn into the stream of activity and invited to take part in the merry-making. Use this opportunity to melt the stiffness which is a malady of the “teens,” and convince the lads and lassies who feel awkward and *de trop* that there is a place for them, and that their services are indispensable. Pray see to it that some shy and sensitive young creature does not hide away to mourn privately that he or she is not wanted. Such a feeling is a little affectation, of course, but leads to very real discomfort, and we must recognize the first symptoms of the discontent and break it up.

Let us make the holiday season a real time of rejoicing and innocent frolicking and general good will and conviviality. Let old and young, the stately heads of the family and the servants, meet on the common ground of humanity and good feeling, and enjoy together for a little while a relaxation of ordinary restraints. Old customs are sweet, and

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the best prayer I can make for all the children throughout the land, whom I dearly love, and for the elders, in whom I take a warm interest, is that upon the day now close at hand they may all enjoy together an "old-fashioned Christmas." And with even deeper earnestness the prayer is made that the glow of our hearth fires may spread abroad and warm those who will be cold and cheerless without the loving remembrance of kind hearts. In the midst of our merrymakings we ought surely to let a thought and a humane effort extend out toward "God's poor."

It is said that in "old times" children listened to the conversation of their elders, and so learned something of what was going on in the world; now, the elders listen to the children, and so learn how the world is going.

## A View of School Life

THE indifference of the majority of parents toward their children's school life is surprising. In their opinion there is a great gulf fixed between that and their home life. During the one period they are supposed to be under the guardianship and control of a corporation expressly provided to take charge of their mental training, and the whole responsibility as to this part of their education is shifted upon the persons who happen to occupy temporarily the position of teachers.

Very few parents take the pains to become personally acquainted with the men and women who are invested with such vast authority over their children. They would not permit anything like this free intercourse with any other stranger, but while they claim the privilege of supervising the intimacies that their children indulge outside of school, the mere fact that she is their teacher exempts a woman from those investigations regarded as necessary and proper under other circumstances.

Perhaps parents ordinarily underestimate the ex-

tent of a teacher's influence. They believe school life to consist almost wholly of set recitations, and lessons learned from books, and some of them entertain the agreeable opinion that the child goes to school simply to become proficient in certain intellectual acquirements, and that his character will not be affected by a merely perfunctory relation with his instructors.

But the intellectual training he obtains is by no means the only education a child acquires at school. A teacher possesses, from the very fact of his or her position, a great moral influence. It is not inferior in scope to the power of the preacher. The little raised platform on which stands the perhaps shabby desk from which issue continually suggestions and admonitions, is no less a pulpit because the utterances of its occupant are supposed to be of a secular nature. There is no wall between learning and ethics, indeed, the two are inseparable, and with every addition to our knowledge our ideas of right and wrong become modified. The teacher interprets for the benefit of his pupils, he points the moral of a lesson, and they see, for the time, through his eyes. Far from being insensible to impressions during these hours, the child's conscience is alive to impressions at the time that his mental activity is greatest, and the influence of his teacher's advice and suggestions may be so power-

ful as even to outweigh all the influence exerted in a contrary direction at home.

We naturally respect one who is our superior in knowledge, and the teacher invariably starts out with this immense advantage. Besides that which is vested in his own personality he has power derived from being part of a system, a body in which is supposed to be accumulated the wisdom of the country in educational matters, and the young neophyte bows to this mysterious divinity and to its representative. So it comes about that after awhile the child begins to question whether his parent—who incautiously betrays forgetfulness of facts that are to the student, at present, the most important facts in the world—knows as much as he does himself, while he is sure that his teacher knows more. Where is the balance of power now? Who, under these circumstances, has most to do with moulding the character of the child?

Some parents are well aware of a teacher's power in influencing a child's conduct; notably, those of the poorer class, who have so little time to become acquainted with their own children that they deal with them almost entirely upon general principles, scold, advise, and punish at recurrent intervals, and are happy to throw as much of their responsibility as they can rid themselves of upon other shoulders. Instances are not uncommon of

a mother confessing that the child she has borne and nourished is less susceptible to her direction than to that of the comparative stranger employed to supervise his mental development. One mother actually went to her boy's teacher and implored her to advise Johnny "to behave himself better at home." Adding pathetically, "he will do whatever you tell him, and I can't do anything with him." It would seem as if this was asking rather more than is fair of a woman who had seventy boys under her charge, and to whom Johnny was an atom in the mass, hurriedly considered and scarcely known in his own personality apart from the others. In this respect our crowded public schools are not as efficient as were the old country district schools, where the teacher had a more intimate association with her pupils.

It is due to teachers to say that usually they do the best they can. Often overworked and annoyed by lack of proper facilities for carrying on their labors to the best advantage, they yet contrive to fulfil what is expected of them, not only by that exacting body, the Board of Education, but by parents themselves. Yet, teachers are not exempt from ordinary failings of humanity. They are liable to be inefficient, superficial, unjust, impetuous, as other men and women are. They are liable to take unaccountable aversions and likings to certain pu-



pils, and if not restrained by the strictest sense of duty, to have scapegoats and favorites, who are respectively embittered or spoiled. It is absurd to believe that every tutor is fitted to undertake the guidance of these young human beings left so completely to his control. At best, he is likely to entertain decided opinions as to life and conduct much at variance with the ideas of the parents, and if the latter choose to exercise the direction it is natural for persons of strong character to exert, the child is shuttlecocked between tutor and guardian, and either rendered vacillating or rebellious.

Both parent and teacher may wish to serve the best interest of the child; each is a most valuable element, and each should be able to give him something not to be obtained from the other. But if they work in contrary directions, they annihilate one another; and if only one labors, the other remaining passive and indifferent, comparatively little can be accomplished. School life and home life should go on harmoniously, and supplement each other. There should be no clashing nor confusion. And the only way that this can be brought about is for parent and teacher to understand one another, to exchange views and experiences, and by putting together the two halves of the child's existence make a complete picture that will present him to them both in his entire personality, and enable

both to exert their united influence in the same direction, and for his true welfare.

The question that naturally comes up is, How can the right relations be established between parents and teachers? It is true that there are some difficulties in the way of these friendly relations which it is not within the power of the teachers to remove, although in general they appreciate the great advantage to the children of this personal acquaintance. It might be possible to have occasional social meetings of parents and teachers in the schoolrooms, in the evening; but the usual rule is that the school buildings shall not be used for any other purposes than for the routine work of the school. There are no social gatherings, none of the many features of entertainment and instruction which would greatly advance the interest of the students and add to the general welfare of the community.

At rare intervals, it is true, some parents visit the schools and have a little talk with a teacher, and it has been remarked by the latter that such a visit from father or mother invariably has a good effect upon the child; that he is for awhile afterwards more tractable, and more interested in his studies from the sense of this oversight. But, many parents do not enter their child's schoolhouse during the entire year; do not know his teacher by

sight, and have the vaguest idea of the studies he is pursuing. In fact, the child is completely abandoned to the charge of his tutors and his education is supposed to be adequately provided for.

That this is not the best condition of affairs is proved by the marked superiority of the pupils whose parents interest themselves in their studies, and seek a personal acquaintance with their teachers. In every instance this is distinctly beneficial to the child. Acquiring an education is not an easy task; there is much that is monotonous, dreary, and seemingly useless. If the child perceives that his parent is indifferent, that he looks upon the school period merely as so much time to be passed in a certain way, he very naturally views the matter himself as a perfunctory duty, to be performed somehow, and with as little labor as can be put into it. The children of the great middle class, who go to school as a matter of course, are more apt to be in this indifferent mood than the very poor, for the parents of the latter are usually ambitious that something shall come of the sacrifices they make to let their children be educated, and although they are themselves ignorant, they inquire frequently whether their boys and girls are doing as well as can be expected of them, and keep them up to the mark pretty effectually.

Teachers who have a class of from fifty to sev-

enty pupils—and unhappily in most large schools this is the average—have not time to become acquainted with their pupils individually during school hours, and this is a great loss to the children. Sometimes a little consideration for the peculiarities of a child makes all the difference between success for him or failure, and often if a teacher was enlightened by a few suggestions from the parent as to his disposition, the course could be made much smoother.

As a rule teachers are glad to have parents visit the school and pleased at any evidence of interest in methods and progress. There are exceptions, and sometimes the well-meant advances of parents are met by cold rebuffs. But in general, teachers are fully alive to the value of parental co-operation, and are quite ready to embrace every opportunity to bring about those personal relations which would render the task of guiding the children more a matter of intelligence and less a matter of chance.

The difficulty in the way of establishing such a relation lies apparently not with the teachers, but with the parents. It is their indifference, their culpable indolence and carelessness, which permit wrong conditions to exist, and make their children suffer from the evils which are quite remediable if a little energy were judiciously employed. Parents do not understand the advantage of united

effort. They stand by themselves, each family bulwarked by its own pride of isolation, and consequently the efforts of those who are sufficiently interested to attempt reform where it is needful, pass merely for individual protests. Yet, parents are the great power in the community. They can accomplish anything, have whatever they wish. There is no reason why they should submit to impositions or abide by the mistakes of those in a minority. They make school boards and pay for school buildings and for instruction. It is their duty to see that their money is properly expended and that the best results are wrought. Yet, they often stand helplessly before as great an evil as could possibly exist, and doom their children to conditions which inevitably bring about in many of them ill health, depleted energies, loss of hope and enthusiasm in their work, and consequent ruin to their intellectual development.

In every city there are overcrowded schools. Classrooms built to accommodate fifty children are made to contain sixty or seventy, even seventy-five ! Teachers say that they sometimes have ten or more children in their rooms who have no desks. They are obliged to sit for hours on forms without backs to them, to sit upon the floor, and do their writing upon the steam radiator ! It is almost impossible to preserve order under such circum-

stances, and it is unreasonable to require the children to do good work without any facilities. In the manual training-schools three boys occupy the space that rightfully belongs to but two. Neither carpentering, wood-carving, nor drawing can go on properly. Thousands of children are turned away from the schools annually because they absolutely cannot get inside the buildings, and the strain of competition is so great that often the smallest pretext is seized upon to dislodge a child who would have been helped to overcome his deficiency in scholarship if there were not so large a number of outsiders eagerly waiting for his place.

All the physical exercises that can be devised cannot obviate the injury to a child's figure caused by prolonged stooping over his books when he is obliged to sit without any support to his back, and to write and draw upon the floor. "Are parents aware of these conditions?" was incredulously asked of a teacher, lately. "Oh, they do not inquire," was the reply. "They are too glad to get a child into the school at all, to be fussy. But I am sorry for the children. I do the best I can for them, but how can I make more room?"

There is but one way to obviate this evil. We *must* have more school buildings, and employ more teachers. Whatever sum is spent upon education must be increased if there is positive proof of its

being inadequate. If parents cannot provide for their children properly they should have none. And if there are some unrecognized forces working against the best interests of their offspring in a country which affords almost unlimited natural facilities for right development, inquiry should be made into the causes and there should be speedy redress. The children are growing apace. Every month and year is of vast importance in their lives. They cannot afford to wait the slow action of legislatures. Let parents themselves take in hand these matters which are distinctively their own affair. A general petition, signed by all the parents of any community, would compel attention. Any measure that they would unite upon would be carried. The chief difficulty is to induce them to cooperate. A parent whose child has a pleasant berth in the school prefers to let well alone, and has little sympathy to bestow upon outsiders, while the outsiders fear to incur disfavor by being aggressive. Truly, most of the good things in this life are lost, not from want of ability to get them, but from indifference.

When the matter is put plainly before them, however, parents cannot refuse to see that it is their duty to exercise some care and oversight over that large portion of their children's lives which is spent in the schoolroom. Personal acquaint-



ance with the teachers, scrutiny of the sanitary condition of the school buildings and of their accommodations, and some supervision of their children's school work are indispensable aids to that education they are, in general, anxious to secure for their boys and girls. And when their interest is once aroused it cannot be long before the barriers in the way of free intercourse between parents and teachers are removed. Associations will be formed, and places of meeting agreed upon; topics for discussion will be selected, and the interchange of experiences will be found an invaluable element in the labors of both.

Surprising developments often take place where parents and teachers come together, and there always results a better understanding of the child and an increased interest in his welfare.



An innocent application of an unwary remark was made by a small maid of four, in whose presence her mother had observed one day that, as she had but one child, all her jewelry would belong to Daisy when she died. The next day as Daisy was standing by the bureau admiring the jewel casket she suddenly fixed her bright eyes on her mother and observed gently, "Mamma, I wiss you'd hurry up and die!" "Why, my dear—why does my little girl want her mamma to die?" asked her mother, shocked at this cool disposal of herself. "*Betause*," said little Daisy gravely, "den I would have de watch an' de shane and all de pitty sings."

## Children Love Color

AMONG the valid reasons why the practice of wearing mourning should be discontinued is its injurious effect upon children. They are naturally fond of bright colors and are sensibly affected by the dress of their elders. Black is generally detested, and crape, that unwholesome substitute for suttee, is sufficient to cast a pall over the merriest spirits. And it is not a transient depression, to be easily cast off, for a child's mind is like a flower; whatever hurts at all, injures for all time. Infantile prejudices and tastes influence us unaware, in the affairs of maturity.

The disposition of a man or woman is fixed by the prevailing mood of his childhood. Whatever influences him toward cheerfulness builds up his store of energy and courage, increasing his power of success and usefulness, and whatever saddens him lowers his vitality in the same degree, affecting both health and temper. Observe a child who has spent years in a house where several female relatives perform their conventional duty to some deceased member of the family by wearing mourning. Almost surely, if a boy, he is gloomy and

sullen; if a girl, she is pale and pathetic. And this period, which should contain the storehouse of bright and happy recollections, is dark with unnecessary sorrow.

Our duty is to the living. The man or woman who finds nothing in all the world to take as a new centre of interest when that which was dearest is gone, pays little compliment to the understanding of the Supreme Power that exacts of him still to live and work. We have no right to "broaden the skirts of darkness" ever hovering cloud-like about our spiritual world, by materializing gloom in our own persons to youthful eyes. Children have an ardent love of grace and prettiness. They hover about a beautifully dressed woman, adoring every tint of her gown, and revelling in the lustre of her jewels. A careless, indifferent society woman who flutters into the nursery for a few minutes before going out to a ball will often arouse the most passionate admiration in the breasts of her neglected children, who fall under the spell of her beauty. Far off as she is from them she represents a world all light and loveliness, and they cherish the picture of her in their hearts. She exerts through her outward charms an influence her character could not command.

The devoted mother who plods about in a dingy gown is not nearly so much loved, although time,

which equalizes everything, reveals her value. But why should she lose the great advantage of attraction? Putting aside all questions of taste and elegance and dealing only with this matter from the standpoint of cheerfulness, it must seem worth while to every one who thinks about it, to supply the essential element of bright colors in their children's daily lives. The mother who wore red bows on her slippers for her baby boy's sake was not far out of the way. We could all do at least so much.

One of the unfortunate attempts at wit which a friend recalls to this day, although the occurrence lies forty years back in the annals of her childhood, is to the following effect. A favorite aunt became engaged, and little Fanny showed considerable aversion to the young man who had come to "carry off her aunt." To propitiate her they one evening took her out driving. Fanny, who prided herself upon her propriety of speech, sat demurely silent until she had thought of something important to say. This occasion was their horse stopping on the road in front of a wrecked vehicle, as if interested in the sight. "Mr. Moss," said Miss Fanny, "is yours a *female* horse?" "Why?" asked the amused gentleman. "I think," the demoiselle answered, bringing out her explanation with a sense of triumph in her own sagacity, "that she shows the curiosity of her *sex* in stopping to look at the wreck!"

## Personalities and Vanity

MANY mothers who are careful and judicious in other respects commit the mistake of talking about their children's ways and peculiarities when the children are present. To discuss a child's character within his own hearing, and especially with some one not a member of the family, is certain to wound his feelings if he is sensitive and shy, or to encourage conceit in him if he is inclined to be forward. In any case it develops egotism, and gives him the impression that he is an object of great importance. Young ears should not be regaled with tales of their owner's exploits, and even if we have good reason to be proud of our children we should avoid telling anecdotes before them which tend to feed vanity. Absurdly enough, I have even heard a wee sprout, perched up on a great chair in the drawing-room while his mother was talking about him to guests, drawl forth, "Mamma, tell about the day I spoke my piece at the kindergarten!"

While we ought to encourage goodness by praise administered in private, laudation in public is as much to be avoided as censure before wit-

nesses. We must neither parade virtues nor faults. It is a temptation to parents to make a loving display of their young people, and a very natural thing to suppose that no harm can come of it. But even leaving out the danger of developing vanity, there is the danger of setting an example of gossip. Much of our talk before children is too personal. We play without cessation upon the strings of blame and praise, of likes and dislikes, until these newcomers in the world acquire the idea that to tell what they know of the sayings and doings of others, and make comments thereon, is all there is of conversation.

Another rock easy to split upon is to rehearse before them our methods of discipline and management. This is particularly a foible of parents who are weak in government. They think to impress little John with the terrors in store for disobedience or rudeness by running over in a casual way the kinds of punishment it is within the power of the authorities to inflict. Sometimes a visitor alludes to some graceful trait, or remarks that little John does not do some naughty thing lads are prone to, and the unwise mamma will quickly rejoin: "He knows he would get a whipping if he did that!" Whereat little John colors with shame and resentment, feeling that a matter that should lie strictly between his mamma and himself has been

given unnecessary publicity. And if he is a well-intentioned lad the outrage hurts more because it has been implied that he only does right through fear. Any courageous nature would have the impulse to show fight under these circumstances, to prove itself possessed of courage. We are trenching upon delicate ground when we touch the springs either of vanity or shame, and we had best let our children hear as little as possible of all those allusions to themselves which it is our habit to make.

The custom of training children to "show off" their singing and recitation and other little accomplishments is to be deplored. A tiny creature, beautifully dressed, standing up to "speak" before an audience is a questionable spectacle. They may enjoy it, and parents too, but at what cost? Self-consciousness, vanity, and aggressiveness drive modesty out of the child's heart, while the elders are laying up for themselves a stock of annoyance for the future.

A child who has once tasted the sweets of flattery craves it thereafter as he does other unwholesome delicacies. It would astonish his thoughtless friends to know the burning restlessness that obtains possession of a young mind that has been thoroughly aroused into self-consciousness. Compliments and admiration are courted and greedily



hoarded. Every word of praise is repeated to whoever will listen, and the days are reckoned as those on which certain pretty things were said and those that were barren of compliments. The child learns to "pose" and falls with pitiable naïveté into that attitude which was once called plainly "fishing for compliments." As a nation we are said to be peculiarly sensitive and vain, and we need more than ordinary caution, in order to discourage in our children these undesirable qualities which our present carelessness tends to foster.

A certain offset to these flatteries consists in that ready intolerance of the American people to anything that is voted "a bore." We are brave, we are patient under discomforts, and we are generous toward our foes; but we cry out lustily against what is an infliction upon our nerves; that which is tiresome is unendurable. So, when the child we have petted and excited into unnatural forwardness ceases to amuse we turn the cold shoulder toward his efforts, leaving him in puzzled wonder at our inconsistency. An instance of this occurred upon one occasion of a parlor entertainment where a charming little boy was coaxed to recite some verses in the intervals of the charades. Mounted upon a table, he went through the task with an animation that showed the taste for exhibition to be already well developed. But excited by ap-

plause, he saw reason for continuing to monopolize public attention, and whenever a motion was made to take him down, he called out, "I know another one, papa!" until the amusement of the onlookers turned into fatigue, and murmurs were heard, "The child is a nuisance; take him away!" And he was taken away, indignant and protesting. A hard lesson for him, that a public deposes its favorite the instant it has had enough of him; but let us hope he learned it so thoroughly as to save him from disappointment and heartburning in the future.

The vanity of a parent which sees in a child nothing but a miniature of self is the more reprehensible when it impels him to engage for this youthful representative an attention he could not gracefully ask in his own person. Sometimes the culture of talents is looked upon merely as a means of reflecting lustre upon the family, and children already overloaded with a sense of emulation are urged not to fail in school exercises lest papa or mamma should be mortified. Latterly, what was once confined to the college has come into the school, and primary teachers and even kindergarten teachers have caught the fever and turn the beautiful lessons of Froebel into amusing spectacles for the public. It was gratifying to see in one of the leading educational journals of the West

a protest against the exhibit of kindergarten games at the Columbian exposition. Such exhibitions are certainly a perversion of the spirit and aim of Froebel's lessons which may seem trivial and meaningless to minds incapable of penetrating below the surface, but are full of profound moral purpose to the earnest and thoughtful observer.

That kindergarten teacher was excusable, although mistaken, who in her anxiety to cater to the wishes of her patrons for pretty spectacles, substituted Delsartian attitudes for the breath calisthenics the professor she had engaged wished to give the children. "I wanted you to teach them some graceful attitudes for the Christmas exhibition," she said with a most innocent show of disappointment. "Then you should have engaged some one to veneer, not develop your pupils," the thorough-going professor responded. And he spoke the difficulty of a number of teachers who conscientiously desire to do their best for their pupils but are balked by parental vanity and superficiality. Even in the midst of this terrible hurly-burly of our period, which makes us wild for something to show and to look at, it would be well for us to recollect that "Life is real, life is earnest," and exhibition is not the chief end of mankind.

Teachers cannot stem the tide of parental wishes; they must give substantially what parents

are willing to pay for, and if exhibitions are preferred to real progress, the latter must be sacrificed. But let there be no mistake about its being really sacrificed. Drill takes an immense amount of time, and to make very small children act automatically, so that a pretty effect is secured, uses all the energy of pupils and teacher. The difference between true and false education is in their glitter. Mental growth is slow, internal, and only manifest in the whole character of the individual; while one who has devoted his time to learning motions can go through them when called upon, to the admiration of an audience. Superficial persons will never apprehend that the most valuable lessons are those which cast no mark upon the bulletin sheet of the school, but sink deep into the mind of the pupil to be reproduced some day in living words and acts whose source no one will trace.

That the ability to overreach competitors is born in persons no one would doubt who had ever known my young friend Hattie D——. Yet there were good points about the child, and her little vice was innocently pursued. So she had rather a rude shock one day when public opinion denounced her. The children in the neighborhood had clubbed their pocket-money to make a party in the back yard of one of the number, but a dead lull took place in the middle of the festivities and the mother of the young hostess went out to inquire into it. Her daughter rushed up to her and, pointing to the offending guest, cried indignantly, "Oh, mamma, mamma! We all put in five cents but Hattie, and she only put in a cent, and now, after eating up all the party, she is mad at us and wants her cent back!"

## When Character is Forming

BRET HARTE, in one of his characteristic stories in verse, describes a certain clique of young men who pledged themselves to reform upon New Year's Day, and fell away from grace, one by one, until by mid-spring not a single upholder of the faith was left. The question is suggested as to whether it is worth while to pledge one's self to conduct much above and beyond our habitual practice, since broken faith is almost inevitable. Nothing is more certain than that after that period of life is reached when character is established, and habits more or less fixed, a person will continue, despite new impulses, to do about as he has done in general, and that a total revolution, either in aim or accomplishment, is to a degree improbable.

But the case is altogether different in early life. While character is in process of forming every effort in the right direction, every aspiration toward a high standard has an influence which will tell later on. And the higher the ideal that is held up before the youthful gaze the greater will be attainment, for we may always count upon falling short of our wishes; and the boy who starts out in

life with heroic intentions will do more and make better progress than one who expects little of himself. Unnumbered failures precede every advance in goodness; fresh starts, renewed resolutions, stumbles, repentances, and beginning over again make up the history of ordinary life.

If the child who makes promises of unexampled excellence yet falls into pitfalls of naughtiness loses courage, and thinks it no longer worth while to try, he should be encouraged by every tender device, and restored to self-respect. What if every night the slate that records the day's history is marred and scratched with blunders and wilful errors? Is it not better to expunge them all and begin the next new day with a fair, fresh surface, in the hope that the writing may be cleaner and more beautiful? If it were possible, I would wipe out even the memory of a naughty yesterday, and turn all his thoughts and hopes toward the future; for the child who is compelled to think of himself as bad is like a man in a well who sees the sun far above him but is unable to climb up toward warmth and comfort. While, on the other hand, the feeling that the old self has been cast off with the night, and that with the dawn come fresh possibilities, is an inspiration and an incentive toward stronger efforts than we have made before.

I remember that in my childish days the New

Year used to seem like a tangible, positive thing. I fancied that the world settled up all its old affairs on the 31st of December and made an entirely new beginning with the dawn of January 1st. And I felt an obligation upon myself to make new beginnings. There was a sweeping away of the old litter of toys in order that the charming Christmas gifts might have room, and there was secretly the turning over of a new leaf in my young life, and the banishment of certain habits which my conscience disapproved but which it seemed only possible to shake off when the old year, with its darkened visage, should have relaxed its hold upon me.

Who among us cannot recall such pathetic efforts to "put off the armor of darkness and put on the armor of light"? And do we not also recollect the keen pang aroused when some slight peccadillo brought down from an unconscious elder the wholesale reproach of "Naughty child! always doing something you ought not to do!" *Always!* Was it so? Did our good resolutions, our earnest efforts count for nothing, and were we accounted by the critics whose judgment was unimpeachable no better this week than we were last? Away, then, with poor little attempts at reform, and let us return to the easy path of indifference. As well have a good time since we were considered thoughtless and selfish anyhow.



Ah, mothers, take care what you say; forbear these sweeping reproofs, lest you blast in the bud with your icy criticism some tender plant of promise your child is nurturing in his heart with timid hope. Many and severe are the discouragements to virtue in childhood. Added to the impulses of passion is the charge of a parent or teacher that one is cursed with "a bad temper"; upon the clog of gross appetite is dropped the heavier weight that the home community has dubbed the small gourmand "a pig"; and—final horror!—some involuntary deviation from truth has provoked the saying that "You cannot believe what that child tells." Are we totally forgetful of our own sensitiveness to public censure? Are we not aware that we are very much inclined to live up or down to our neighbors' opinion of us, and are better or worse in agreement with what our friends expect? So, too, are children swayed in the right or wrong direction, readily inclined to goodness or evil according to suggestions, as the sensitive weather-vane obeys the motion of the wind.

With all the impetus that can be gathered let us send the little child onward each day toward a higher life. The instinct childhood has, to make epochs for itself and fence off time into distinct periods, is a wise one. No better way can be devised for re-creation than to believe that the past

is dead, and a clean, fair future before us. It seems to me a good plan to encourage the children to fancy that with the death of the old year their old, faulty selves may be made to perish also, and that on New Year's Day a new world spreads out wherein they can enter hopefully and courageously, unfettered with memories or reproaches from the past. And when the lofty little head is drooped, and the poor little heart wounded with a sense of its failures, let us inspire and cheer the child instead of adding censure to self-reproach. For out of a thousand failures success grows at last, and to the heart that keeps up its courage there comes at length the fruition of the hope that has inspired its persistent and patient efforts.

Singing, which is one of the most beneficial and exhilarating pastimes for children, is not sufficiently indulged in. It is singularly difficult to induce the children in Sunday-school to sing out freely, and when there are strangers present the little ones are almost sure to be seized with a shyness that makes them dumb. Much of this shyness would be overcome if in the family there was a practice of singing together in the evening. Pianos are everywhere, and almost all mothers can play enough to manage a few simple melodies. A "Good-night song" before separating would be found to soothe away some of the cares and vexations of the day, and the children would be more ready to go peacefully to bed, their minds having been calmed and their nerves quieted by the music.

## The Flower of Innocence

“LET us preserve to women,” says Michelet, “this *velvet down of the soul*.” He spoke for the generation that is past; the delicate, shrinking women who feared to behold any fact in its naked simplicity, and would have it adorned with all the elaborate trimmings of a hyperbolical imagination; who yet retained, underneath this mien of drooped eyes and flushing cheeks, a strong and rude curiosity for the mysteries they made believe ignore. The gentle, fanciful historian of woman’s heart had the instinct to protect the innate sense of purity and refinement he admired from the clumsy attacks even of women themselves. He would have had them keep always the bloom of the peach, the ineffable fragrance of the briar-rose, that uplifts its modest head in the depths of some solitary wood human foot has never trampled.

There is something so exquisitely beautiful in innocence that even those who deem it a duty to be wise relinquish the privilege of their ignorance with a sigh. This is the age—perhaps not of wisdom—let us say, of knowledge. Women have cast down their idol of clay and set up a god of marble,

lofty of brow, grand of proportion. They worship intellect. It is a noble deity, bearing in the powerful right hand all possibilities of progress, excepting one—a tiny blossom, frail and lovely, yet with the potency of exhaling an everlasting perfume from its deep heart. This flower of innocence lies at the feet of the marble god. His ambitious eyes do not see it, and his votaries have forgotten its value in the rush for laurel, for jewelled diadems; sometimes, it may be, they are constrained to forget it, in their struggle for bread.

Clasped in the infant's tiny hands, reflecting from its deeply concealed light a roseate glow that tinges the youthful face with that mysterious film that seems angelical, innocence ever reappears in a world of suffering. It comes with the child; his birthright. Too often it is bartered away for a mess of potage; and far oftener it is stolen from him by coarse and ruthless hands, belonging to those who are his sworn protectors. This need not be. The profane ravage is without excuse. For innocence is not ignorance of right, but ignorance of evil. It is not fear, hiding less from outside foes than from the betraying voice of its own guilty thought, but valor, sweet, high, and self-sustained, going, as in Chaucer's fair allegory, among lions and taking no harm; encountering perils of earth and of wicked men, and cowing

them solely by the light that beams from its pure eyes.

The great painters always put into their children's faces this fine light. We see it sometimes now, less often than we should. The little ones that are growing up in the broad glare of our age of knowledge seem to have exchanged this emanation from within for the sickly hue of gaslight. There is a look of prescience, of cunning, of experience on the baby faces. Is innocence coming into the world feebler, that it so soon dies? Do the mothers whisper dark secrets to their unborn children, that the shadow falls so swiftly where all should be pure? "Wisdom lingers"—lingers long, indeed, if it is the mother's knowledge of good and evil that debauches her infant. She has dwelt too intimately with sin and sorrow if the baby knows not how to smile. This "velvet down of the soul" must not be brushed away from her if she would transmit unimpaired the most delicate and lovely heritage that a woman can give to her child.

In all revolutionary periods stern necessity builds its solid structures on the ruins of the beautiful. But the victim is not wantonly killed, only bidden to remove out of sight and out of the way. She creeps forth in good time and twines her arms about her conqueror, and with added loveliness

gained from rest, shines in his softened gaze, the glorified creation of his dawning wish. We are passing through one of the worst and it may be the most necessary social revolutions that ever devastated homes and stifled the sweet and natural emotions of the human heart. It is "the woman's age," the great cry goes ringing through the world, and the men bow half shamefacedly, half cynically, yielding a little to the tide, but seeing what the women dare not pause to see, the flowers being swept away, and the barren rocks being exposed on the deserted shore.

This revolution, so sadly necessary, will pass soon, having pressed to a solution some problems that have tormented active minds and embittered anxious hearts. What shall we have gained? A bed-rock foundation on which to build up a higher, finer civilization. But unless we would have this building over-long deferred, it will be wisdom to avoid the reckless destruction of material already here, and which we shall need to use again. After the establishment of civil and social government upon the lofty and simple principle of equity, what are to be the relations between men and women in this fair future condition?

Doubtless every woman secretly cherishes the dream of a new and beautiful chivalry; a state of refinement when the love of man for woman and

of her for him will be founded upon the deepest mutual respect and admiration. It is an enticing vision; one that possibly may become a reality. But it will never come about through the iconoclastic efforts of the utilitarian. The talk is all of "rights," and of "progress," and of "intellect"; but were Macaulay here, were Montaigne looking on, these astute historians might exclaim, "They mean license when they cry 'liberty'";—"They mean *sentiment* when they talk of facts." It is upon sentiment, refined and beautified, but still the same in kind, that the new social relation must build, if at all. Reason alone furnishes no atmosphere for a home.

There is much to be reprobated in the sentiment of the present day, but for its demoralization, women as well as men are to blame. They have been careless of the flowers in their ambitious march. Yet if these trampled flowers die—if the spark of tender regard for the delicacy of women as women, expires in the breasts of those who are sometimes, it must be confessed, "ruthless tyrants," but oftener forbearing protectors—women will have cause to mourn long and bitterly the destruction of the sole principle that can make life beautiful and noble, and to regret the day when they exchanged for faulty flesh and blood the marble idol, mind.



To bring this matter closely home, let us consider the attitude we have permitted to be assumed in our households of boys and girls. The new civilization demands respect for girls, consideration for them, reverence for them as the future mothers and counsellors and companions of men. But in shame of the old sexual servitude, when the little sister used to wait penitentially upon her brother, we have come to encourage a certain aggressive bearing on the part of our baby daughters. They are the "equals" of their brothers, they are not to give way; they are to exercise, to romp, to wrestle, in pursuance of their inborn right. The boys are freed from any duty of attendance or of special courtesy; they are only required to respect the prowess, mental and physical, of this so-called weaker sex. Is the result satisfactory? On the contrary, from every quarter rises the cry on the one hand of the rudeness and indifference of the masculine being and on the other of the aggressiveness and boldness of the feminine being. The relations are not happy between the sexes. They complain more and more loudly, and there seems more and more to complain of. It is natural to expect it. The amenities are forgotten, forbearance despised, and open warfare declared.

Yet all this ferment is supposed to be necessary

to the settling down of the turbulent elements into happy conditions of peace. Perhaps a certain amount was necessary, but let us hasten to put a stop to the wasteful struggle before it has gone to a fatal extent. The mind and body of our little daughter are not all; let her develop both to the limit of her ability, but let us care also for that delicate, gracious faculty which is her most precious possession—her womanhood. The rough and familiar contact with her boy comrades brushes away “the velvet down of the soul.” Can she not learn with them, play with them, and yet maintain, in the midst of this frank and friendly intercourse, the gentleness, the sweetness, and the tact which properly belong to her sex?

And the boy—can he not be encouraged to develop what still exists as a germ in the soul of every manly being, reverence and affection for his sister and his friend, because she is a little woman and a little lady? The sweet, old-fashioned words, *ladie* and *gentleman* have fallen into disuse since their primitive meaning has been forgotten, but let us trust that what they represented will reappear. Not until the little boys and girls who mingle everywhere according to our liberal notions, so merrily and hoidenishly, are trained again, not as in the olden time when one was to be servant to the other, but in the enlightened view of a more aspiring civiliza-

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tion, to serve each other mutually, graciously, and in distinct recollection of the true and essential differences nature has implanted in them, can the fair dawn of the looked-for social millennium color the skies of our land.

✓ A very displeasing trait in a child and one that occasions frequent reprimands is a habit of self-excuse. Some children are so ready and fertile in reply that it becomes almost impossible to convict them of error. They have to be "pinned down," as it were, and even then show a surprising ingenuity in making explanations, which, without being precisely untrue, are a turning of points in their own favor. When a child shows this disposition the right plan is not to blame him directly, but manage so that when he is in the wrong circumstances will convict him. The logic of facts is incontrovertible, and arouses no feeling of animosity toward persons. It is also desirable to refrain from that common temptation—"driving a fault home." Children do not like the valley of humiliation any better than we do ourselves, and do not derive any benefit to their character from being forced into it. A look, half-smiling, half-accusing, is efficacious; but words arouse the defensive instinct and lead to excuses.

## Growth in Self-Government

OUR children are altogether too grave and worldly-wise. They have a curious, false shame about being amused, as if they thereby laid themselves liable to criticism. Scarcely ever is seen, among those who are at play, a countenance expressing thorough, spontaneous enjoyment. There is a reservation somewhere, a latent tendency to contract the brow, or draw down the corners of the mouth at the least temptation. There are many causes for this unnatural mental attitude. Civilized life has multitudinous pricks for the tender nerves of youth.

One fault that some parents will honestly admit, is the habit they have of discussing in a cynical way, the defects of institutions, of our social customs, and particularly the failings of individuals, in the presence of these as yet unsullied little listeners. They hear that the government is in the hands of corrupt politicians, that the school board is composed of inefficient persons, that vice and poverty are increasing, and worse than all, that the uncle John and aunt Louisa, whom they love

with disinterested affection, are mean and selfish and ought to act very differently by their family.

What confusion reigns in the mind of the child who is cautioned to be exceedingly polite and cordial to the person for whom, if what is alleged of him is true, he cannot help having a profound contempt ! How depressed he feels as, after the breakfast-table annihilation of society, he goes forth to meet the elders in whom he no longer believes, and the young companions in whom he is forced to see embryo sharpers and enemies ! Such experiences are very common, and one can scarcely estimate the harm that is done by this inoculation of pessimism.

One of the rights of a child is to have his moral nature developed. There is danger that with the children of this generation this matter will be overlooked. When the influence of churches, Sunday-schools, and the clergy was more stringent and extended to the details of conduct, children were terrorized into an outward appearance of propriety and their motives and wishes were the subject of inquisitorial notice also. It went hard with the possessor of "an unsanctified spirit." There was no liberty of conscience, no room for choice: he must be good after the set pattern, whether his inclinations were in accordance with it or not.

But the child of our period has benefited by all

the improved conditions of modern life. He thinks, talks, acts from the impulse of self-direction much more than his parents would have been permitted to do. Unquestionably this individualized creature is the inevitable product of a higher civilization. He comes just as the world needs him and he will do his work. But it is with a curious and anxious interest that we watch the unfolding of this complex being who is to be intrusted with the management of a more wonderful and dangerous machinery than the world has ever afforded to any previous generation. He may have the needed mental and physical abilities, the energy, the acumen, but is there not something else that he may not possess? Will he have humanity?

In removing the outward restraints from the consciences of men and allowing each one to become the judge of his own religious necessities we have only followed the essential bias of the times. Liberalism has by no means reached its terminus. The tendency is for a man to become a completely self-governed being, controlled by no law except his own sense of right. But what an immense obligation this liberty imposes! How symmetrical and complete must be the moral nature of an individual who can conduct his life as he sees fit, and is responsible to no one but that inward lawgiver which is the voice of God in his own soul. When

force no longer exists what more subtle and finer influence is to replace it? There is but one: that divine power toward which the race has been lifting the glance of longing and aspiration through all preceding ages—love.

Man will be fit for self-government only when he is as stringently bound by his own sense of obligation to his neighbor as any civil or ecclesiastical law could bind him. When he has achieved a feeling of humanity he will be safely free. This, then, is the most important part of all education: developing in the child a feeling of his obligations to others, teaching him to be unselfish in heart and not only in conduct. Let us impress upon him anew, and in a more gracious sense than the idea obtained once, that “noblesse oblige.” The obligation of being a man and a woman, bound to help and love all other men and women, is one that is far deeper than the obligation of a caste. The new civilization does away with artificial and false distinctions, and opens wide all its portals to moral worth. This is the consummation of human development, as yet only an ideal, carried out feebly and hesitatingly by the most thoughtful and liberal among us. But if we cannot achieve it for ourselves, let us bear it in mind and help to realize it for our children.



The little girl who, upon being told that she was too small to do what she wanted, and replied, "Yes, I suffer a great deal from that!"—voiced a general complaint of childhood. Any one who has made a study of physics realizes the great difficulty there is in conceiving the existence of atoms. We cannot get our minds down to these microscopic objects; and yet, wonderful to know, in an invisible particle of albumen exists, in minute form, the powers and qualities that develop into impulses that move the world. There is a curious egotism in mere bulk. Yet, if the child could express himself, he would tell us that every passion, every capacity, and every motive, that we account so important in ourselves, lives in his own small nature, and is a source of joy and suffering to him, just as our own feelings are to us. Size is only a relative term, and what is small in our opinion may be gigantic to the object itself.

## The Right to be Understood

IN attempting to carry out any reform, from the greatest to the least, people are commonly impatient to see immediate results. If the machinery they have agreed to try does not work perfectly at first, they deride the inventor and cast it aside as useless; if an idea which is manifestly a correct one fails to bear the fruit of full performance, they lose faith in it and talk of "theories in the air." It is especially so with educational reforms, which cost much trouble and seem most slow in good results.

It takes more time to grow a man than to make a garden, and it is far easier to straighten out a crooked shoot which is amenable to mechanical appliances than to correct the evil tendencies of a young human being whose faults have been growing for centuries and have come down to him with the stubborn tenacity of life incident to an hereditary instinct. The best that can be done for him may be too little; but less than the best might work his ruin. Does it disprove the science of medicine that it cannot cure some inherited diseases or change organic deformities into sym-

metry? Then why should theories of discipline which are ideally good be brought into disfavor because in cases of wrong application, and of too late application, they do not operate satisfactorily?

Alterative measures cannot change, however much they may modify, original form; and all methods of training are but alterative measures. We must use them faithfully, but we should not be unduly disappointed if there are phases of character which defy our power of government. The only true education begins far, far back of the newly born child; and if he enters into life morally misshapen, what can we do but employ such means as lie in us to palliate, while recognizing our inability to cope with, the fundamental disorder? Many parents, coming to a sense that their children are unruly and troublesome, that they are "growing up to be a terror to the community," set to work vigorously to change their system of management, and, without inquiry into causes, with little knowledge of human nature and the application of physiology and psychology to the training of human beings, they "do something" purely, as it seems, for the sake of doing *something*, and after a little while fall back into lethargic tolerance of what they have failed to change, saying: "Here is a child who defies all efforts to reform him and who will have his own way despite every-

thing.” And the child, thereupon, is allowed to have “his own way,” to his lasting detriment.

The question arises as to what is “one’s own way” and whether any of us ever do have it. We are worked upon by different internal forces of motive and desire which the most intelligent among us cannot fully understand. The more we do understand them the greater is our power of self-control and the ability to mould others. To a gifted few is given something resembling a divine insight into motive. Melancthon had it; John Chrysostom had it; Friedrich Froebel had it. The sympathetic divination of the best that dwells in any soul is like a gentle, nurturing rain in its power to develop the seeds of virtue. In the worst nature there are undeveloped possibilities of everything good; but it needs genius to bring it forth. If a teacher has wisdom enough, patience enough, and *love* enough, he can perform the miracle of keeping down in his pupil tendencies that have the strength of lions, and encouraging germs of virtue almost too feeble to come up to the light. But to lesser minds and lesser hearts failure is inevitable in the attempt to train natures morally defective.

“If you should have a dozen children, no two of them would be alike in disposition,” observed an experienced matron to a young mother who was exclaiming over the radical differences be-

tween her two boys. This admission is one belonging to the liberal tendency of our modern time. The idea that a family of children resemble peas in a pod, and are to be treated alike, is being replaced by the more scientific opinion that there are natural differences which must be considered. Modern children are not to be managed in groups. It is necessary to deal with them separately. This requires more time, more care, more intelligence than the old way; it requires special preparation for parenthood and the cultivation of good qualities in the guardians who are to exercise discriminating government. The nineteenth century makes large demands of us, and nowhere greater than in its demand for superior character.

The existing race is of a higher type than previous ones. The succeeding one ought to be higher still. It is worth while to take trouble to secure it. In fact, the obligation is immutable. It may not have been of our choice or seeking, but it is here and we must face it. Our children are individuals and bear themselves vigorously in the direction toward which nature impels them. If we are to be helpers, not hinderances, to their proper development, we must aid them to become completely and successfully that which they will become anyway without us; though, perhaps, incompletely and unhappily. If we enter into this

relation with good will and good humor we will find many compensations by the way for our trouble. For nothing is more delightful than to have secured a free intimacy with our children. When the interchange of mutual kind offices is the outcome of affection instead of sense of duty, there is a grace and joy in doing and giving that those whose acts are perfunctory never know.

Children have a right to be understood. And to do this it is necessary to study them, with at least as much pains as we bestow upon the study of the arts and sciences, the accomplishments, and domestic concerns and business enterprises which so largely engross our minds and our time. These are after all only means and ways of living, but children are life itself. The study of child nature may sometime attain to the dignity of being called a science, perchance the noblest, most important of them all.

People who judge superficially say that childhood is the light-hearted period of life, that children do not feel deeply. But those who have entered into the feelings of these little ones and tried to understand them, know that they are not superficial. It is a question whether they are not more subjective than their elders. If their curiosity were not so strong, their awe would prevent their speaking upon grave subjects. But, although they speak, they often give an impression of levity which they are far from feeling. They have no language for thoughts, because that necessarily comes later in life, and so they are thrown back upon the simple vocabulary that deals with objects, and are obliged to talk as materialists of the most delicate and airy fancies that dwell in their minds. We do not know half the beauty and poetry of a child's mind, or we would never treat lightly his serious words and sober ideas, however queerly expressed.

## An Up-hill Journey

THE opinion is rather general among parents that their children are crowded with school work; that too much is required of them by their teachers, and that the standard is one to which only the pupil of exceptional industry finds it possible to conform. The methods pursued in the public schools are far from perfect; doubtless, the demands are sometimes too severe, and the boy or girl who is even slightly incapable, or is of a delicate constitution, is hard pressed to keep up with the rest.

But much of this pressure of work is only in appearance. The constantly increasing tendency of the last twenty years has been toward rendering school work easier for the children, and not only easier, but interesting. There is real anxiety lest the child should be bored by his work; should find the hours spent in the classroom dull and tedious. There is every device to attract his fancy and stimulate his flagging attention, and listlessness is now generally attributed to some defect in the teacher or in his methods, rather than to indolence or incapacity of the pupil.



The middle-aged men and women of the present generation can look back to the days when they travelled over muddy, unpaved roads to the village schoolhouse, where boys and girls came together in the morning from their widely separated homes to spend eight or nine hours under the care of a single teacher, who taught them according to his own sweet will, without regard to their tastes or preferences. Learning in those days was considered a task, and the difficulties were believed to be good for children. There was far less method, and less military precision; classes were seldom graded, and rote-learning was held to be necessary.

We have improved greatly upon that; the memory is not now taxed to the injury of the understanding, and the repetition of long lists of dates and facts is not part of the day's duty. The child is encouraged to observe, to reason and to think for himself, and his own crude and hesitating expressions of "the idea" in his lesson are accepted as an equivalent for the author's language. Doubtless mental development is aided by modern methods more than it was by the sterner discipline of the old-fashioned teaching. There is more readiness, more general information among school-children now than was commonly the case a quarter of a century ago. The modern child is "bright," quick-witted, observant, and inclined to

be argumentative; wanting to have everything proven to his satisfaction, and keenly alive to the *motif* of the hour, that learning is to be acquired with the least amount of pains and trouble.

Yet after a day passed in the society of half a dozen charming children, fresh from their object-lessons and their lecture-lessons and progressive exercises, the critical friend who looks beneath brilliant appearances observes some defects of character and some deficiencies of education which used not to exist to the same extent in the sturdier, if perhaps duller, little boys and girls who studied after the regulation fashion of the ancient régime. There is a lack of exactness, of sound and thorough training in the elementary branches at present, due to our wish to save children, as far as we can, from hard work. Certainly there was an unnecessary amount of drilling and routine labor in the spelling and grammar classes, for instance, of twenty-five years ago; but that labor wrought the happy result of teaching pupils to spell and write and speak the English language with accuracy and precision.

| Only the learning that we have fought for and conquered stays with us. A certain amount of plodding is essential to vigor of character. Is not the modern child less rugged and persistent than his grandfather was? Is he not inclined to weaken

before difficulties, and think that what is troublesome is not worth doing? Courage and persistence are the characteristics of pioneers, and it is sometimes said that the present generation has less need of these qualities than the men who fought against the elements in a new, wild country. But certainly life is not any easier now than it was three centuries ago; there is need of sinew and toughness, of energy and indomitable resolution, if one would succeed in any career, or make his life worth anything to the world.

A child learns to exert himself or to be indolent very early. The first impetus is given in the nursery, but another impulse comes with that second great stage of life, the entrance into school. There is not so great a demarcation between infancy and childhood now, since learning begins in the kindergarten and proceeds through easy and almost imperceptible stages up to the college. The teacher needs both tact and decision to enable him to begin the real discipline of his pupil's mental faculties at the right time, and not prolong babyhood into the period when work should be taken up in serious earnest. Learning ought to be made agreeable, for anything which serves to keep the pupil's mind in a happy condition invigorates the tone of his entire system and makes it easier for him to exert himself. But it must not be forgot-

ten that every new effort of the mind is, to a certain extent, essentially painful. The disagreeable stage of a labor may not be in the beginning, but it comes when some one of the faculties, either the memory, or the understanding, or the will, is called upon to make a new and decided effort. This is the test period, and character here either weakens or toughens, accordingly as it gives up or fights the battle out and conquers.

We cannot save our children this pain, and we ought not to do so. Teachers should not help their pupils over difficulties too often, else they will fall into the mental habit of deferring all troubles to a stronger and more indomitable will. And parents should not pity their children for the necessity of working hard and even painfully. All experienced educators recognize the necessity of painful efforts in the beginning of mental labors, but these periods pass, giving place to delightful seasons of exhilaration, and the young learner is cheered on his path, and helped partially over the next painful period also, through having his courage stimulated. "For courage is," as Emerson says, "but the memory of past successes."

The test to apply to a child to ascertain whether he is studying too hard is to observe whether he can rebound quickly after a season of application. If he is in good physical condition, he ought to

possess the buoyancy which will enable him to throw off all recollection of troublesome problems when the time for play and rest comes. A sharp line ought to be drawn between work and play. The child must lay down his burden and forget its existence sometimes, or else he will become nervous and fretful. The ghosts of partially learned lessons must not haunt his dreams nor dog his enjoyments. A great difficulty with us is that the child studies not too hard, but too continuously.

He dawdles over tasks that could be finished in half the time by a robust, energetic mind. Why do we not see to it that our children have blood enough to supply the power needed by their brains? A pale, sallow child should not be required to perform hard mental labor any more than ashes could be expected to give out heat. Make him exercise, make him eat, make him sleep, make a healthy animal of him, and then set him his lessons, and see how easily he will master them.

Whenever it is practicable the child should be encouraged to prepare such school lessons as it is necessary to study at home, in the mornings. A lesson learned at night cannot be learned without doing violence to the natural order of the mind's activity. The natural period of acquisition is in the morning. After a period of rest and recreation there comes a second period in the afternoon

when study may be pursued, the mind being less vigorous, however, and in the evening the flagging energies can only be stimulated by the will. Have the child go to bed very early and study for an hour before breakfast, and the result will tell favorably upon his health and progress.

There is a wild notion among us that as soon as a baby can sit upright it is nice to teach him certain little tricks. Some one initiates him into the mysteries of "patty-cake," and shows him how to "look like papa," or to stretch his arms to show "how much he loves mamma," or something else of the sort. When he has acquired the cunning trick every one torments him to go through it, until, if he could talk, he might say: "Verily, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing to a baby."

## Innocence is Easy Prey

LIFE is a strange redistribution of benefits. If at any one time something good comes to us, we discover, presently, that something else we valued has slipped away. Often the good thing is replaced by what is not so good, or only good in appearance. As we advance in years we learn to doubt unproved blessings and prefer to hold fast to those things we know the worth of, having found by experience that there is just so much store of joy and comfort in the world for any one of us, and that if we have it in one form we cannot have it in another.

But long before learning this we will have suffered a great succession of robberies. One cannot make a fair trade until he knows the worth, both of the things he bargains for and of the thing he offers in exchange. The first man who sold the Koh-i-noor diamond took five dollars for it, thinking he had but a pretty bit of glass. Many men have parted with their Koh-i-noors for a trifle of lucre. Ignorant savages can be cheated out of a fortune by any one who takes the trouble to flatter



their taste for baubles. A baby would surrender to you the title-deeds of the world for a sugar-plum, and as there are many ignorant and innocent dupes, so there are also many cheats, eager to take an advantage. It seems cruel in nature to launch her innocent fledglings among rogues, who will fleece them out of their eyes before they have begun even to realize the boon of sight. But we all come into the world thus helpless and unsuspecting, and in our early years we are victimized and deceived even by those who are bound to protect us.

Any reflecting person who studies for a single day the children who pass under his view in the street, in the parks, and in the households of his friends, cannot but acknowledge that the attempts that are made to deceive and delude them are as numerous as they are reprehensible. Many persons seem to think that the quickest and easiest way to force a child to go along a certain path, or to do something he objects to doing, is to frighten him. They do not rightly estimate the influence of fear upon his tender sensibilities. Most children are converted into cowards before they are five years old by the threats and intimidations of their guardians and nurses. In mere thoughtlessness mothers themselves not seldom terrorize a baby, not reading rightly the dilated eyes and pal-

ing cheeks which would signify to a physician great mental suffering.

A short time ago I witnessed, on the street, a little scene which amply corroborates this assertion. A father and mother were walking with their two children, one a boy of three or four, the other a mere toddler, whose wayward little feet took him out of the direct path every few minutes. Now he stopped to gaze at a group of little girls on a doorstep, playing with their dolls, and again he paused to investigate a bright bit of tinsel lying on the sidewalk. The mother impatiently admonished him every time one of these interruptions to the conventional promenade occurred, and at length as the baby brought himself to a stand before a beautiful large St. Bernard dog, which stood sentinel at the gate of a garden, and with a child's instinctive liking for animals, stretched out his hand to touch the friendly creature, the woman cried sharply, "Come away, he'll eat you up!" The instant transformation in the child was pitiable. Delight and expectancy were converted by that single sentence into terror and despair. He broke into shrieks and ran toward his mother, who, half ashamed, tried to soothe him by taking back her own words. "No, he won't; stop crying, he won't hurt you!" What wanton destruction of a child's natural innocent fearlessness, and what a

reckless throwing away by the mother of her little one's trust in her own veracity. Would he put faith in her word next time ?

One of the worst evils of forcible measures is that there must ordinarily be a palliation of what is said or done in the heat of the first impulse. One finds the consequences unexpectedly serious, making it necessary to modify rash assertions or mitigate stern sentences. Even cautious, deliberate persons are tempted to rash acts of which the repentance is inevitable, but an emotional, impulsive parent strews his daily path with sparks of temper and showers of regret.

A large proportion of the commands given to children are meaningless. They are uttered mechanically and without reflection. Yesterday we saw a little boy, with a bright, happy face, standing on the sidewalk beside the owner of a beautiful team of horses, who was evidently trying to establish friendly relations between them and the child. He was charmed at being allowed to stroke their glossy coats, and seeing his mother at the window called gleefully to her to see how gentle the horses were. But with a frown and shake of the head, she said, "Come away from there, Georgie !" All the sunshine went out of the little fellow's face, as he turned reluctantly toward the house, obedient to a senseless and unnecessary restricting of his

harmless enjoyment. Why come away? There was evidently no reason for it. The mother merely spoke unthinkingly, as she probably spoke many times every day, not dreaming that she was becoming, in the eyes of her child, a meddler and spoil-sport.

✓ If we want cheerful obedience from our children our commands should have a reason for being. We should restrain ourselves from the constant interference which it seems a parental prerogative to exercise. A wise man, applied to by a distressed mother, said, "Madam, I have found that with children it is always best to be a little deaf, a little dumb, and a little blind." Were a child suddenly to enter a community of persons afflicted after this manner he might exclaim, as Rip Van Winkle exclaimed in another connection, "What parents they would make!" Self-control would answer the purposes sufficiently well, but few of us are aware how deficient in self-control we really are.

Every one resents being watched. From the highest government official down to the kitchen maid, surveillance is regarded as an insult. Instinctively people desire to be trusted to do right of their own free will, and no one is quite himself, quite true to his best impulses, when under suspicion. Children are not only happier when they are trusted, but better than when constantly watched. Especially at playtime should they be left free. There is too much regulating of play at present, too much suggestion and interference. We forget that spontaneous play is an education to the child, that even while he should "learn by doing," some things that it is highly desirable for him to learn come to him through the untrammelled activity of his own imagination.

## Childish Affinities

ANXIOUS inquiries are made by mothers as to the duty of regulating a child's friendships. Should he be allowed to choose his own companions, or ought they to be selected for him? In this, as in all other matters, individual needs must be the basis of rules. It is rather unfortunate that we feel the need of making rules about everything. When houses were farther apart, and there were more playgrounds, this matter of companionship among the children settled itself. Neighbors knew one another, and the boys and girls in adjacent homes were supposed to become more or less intimate, of necessity.

The old village life brought people closer together, there was no occasion for distrust and suspicion, because everybody knew who everybody else was. One had to have very grave cause for disapproval of a neighbor's child before his society could be tabooed. Behavior was the standard then, not social condition. But all that is changed. Friendship has become commercial. The thought is now: What can this person do for me? We

think less of personal qualities than of the benefits to be derived from the association. We want our child to play with this child, or with that one, because the acquaintance is desirable. Is it not true? Would we not "suffer long and be kind" to the little son of our millionaire friend, and shut the doors upon the washerwoman's little one when her first act of mischief was committed?

This is very human. But since we are moved, even in the depths of our best intentions, by motives that cannot be called elevated, we should be careful about controlling the children in matters where their unguided instinct is as apt to be true as our policy. Children are allured by vice—yes, if they have not been taught the beauty and pleasantness of virtue. They are often attracted toward evil-doers, but not because of their vicious acts; because of some graceful and charming quality in them, for the sake of which they forgive everything else.

Bad companions are the more dangerous, that pure and innocent children are apt to see only the brilliancy and fascination of an audacious nature and not realize its mischievous propensities. Guardians should shield their charges from contact with evil in every form, but it can be best accomplished by educating the child's own judgment, so that he can discriminate for himself be-

tween good and evil companionship. It is unavoidable that he will be very often out of our sight and beyond our supervision. At school he will form intimacies of which parents know nothing. Circumstances make it necessary to trust the child. It is wise, then, to make him trustworthy.

Little harm is to be apprehended from what is frank and open. Danger comes with the element of secrecy. The first principle to be instilled into a child's mind, in regard to association with other children, is that he is never to listen to any language which he would not want to repeat to his mother; never to participate in any act which he would be ashamed to have known at home. With this one restriction excepted, children ought to be left free, in great measure, to follow their own instincts in the choice of their friends.

Friendship means more to children than it means to grown persons. It makes up a larger part of their lives, and enters more fully into their thoughts and plans. Sensitive, affectionate children conceive ardent attachments to those of their comrades who inspire admiration for some real or fancied superiority. And unrecognized by himself there dwells in nearly every youthful mind an ideal type by which he is continually testing and trying each new acquaintance. The lover of beauty demands the sparkling eye, the waving hair, the



lovely skin, which are inseparable from his idea of perfection. Another seeks everywhere that indefinable suitability to surroundings we call grace, and falls a captive to the prettiest dancer and wearer of the most tasteful toilets, while the real hero-worshipper bows down to the best scholar and possessor of recognized talent. Each child unconsciously demands some one thing, and nothing else gives satisfaction.

For there are natural affinities amongst children. There are deep wants of the soul which hunger for gratification, and no mother, however tender, no father, however wise, can be quite sure that in giving their child a proper companion and pleasant playmate they have given him one of whom he can make a friend. Most of the unfortunate attachments children form—not necessarily bad associations, but attachments that cause them suffering—are the fault of their elders. If they were not advised so much, not interfered with so often, their instinct would be truer and their judgment would not be bewildered. They would then select their friends for natural reasons, for sympathies, for supplemental qualities, and would less often be disappointed and cast down by the failure to create a heart's idol out of the clay figure propinquity has cast in their path. "What is more delightful than personal magnetism?" asks Bronson Alcott.

"'Tis the charm of good fellowship as of good writing."

We must consider that a child is even more sensitive to this ineffable attraction than the most refined adult. Never afterward, in all his life, will the enthusiast who, at ten years, twines his arms about the neck of his fidus Achates and vows eternal affection, feel the same thrill of delight, which comes to him now from that unreserved abandonment. Never again will the little girl who so worshipfully regards the dear friend who is taking dolls' tea with her in the nursery, derive the same rapture from intercourse with any one of her future five hundred friends. Nature is strong in the pure, simple heart of childhood. Let us meddle with her reverently.

Children often go to the well and bear away a brimming cup, to have it dashed from their lips just as they are about to taste of it. Such a cup, most probably, will be the box full of treasures which they have spent their summer vacation in accumulating. "Trash!" the mother calls it disdainfully, and she has no room for it in the family winter quarters. Pray, stop, good mother, and look into the matter a little, before throwing away the results of your child's months of labor. Do we not treasure mementos of the past? Is there not in an old album a few pressed leaves, a battered cup put away in a secret place, an old print or two in a cupboard? We keep them for the pleasure associated with them. A child, too, has his associations, and his little heart twines fervently around something that looks to us utterly worthless. Instead of condemning his little properties, let us induce him to look them over, when packing up, and save what he most values. It is such consideration as this towards his rights that makes him considerate of others.

## Cultivating Taste

IN some respects modern parents are more neglectful of their children's character than parents were before the Christian era. They have a contempt for their taste. They do not strive to cultivate in them a love for the beautiful. The young Greeks had always before their eyes the perfection of form and color. In their dreams were reproduced pictures full of grace and harmony. But the young American, the young Englishman—natives of the two most ambitious countries upon earth—grow up with crude ideas of what constitutes beauty. Their parents wait for them to grow to years of discretion before they try to imbue them with this love for the beautiful. They seem to think that when the time of necessity comes they can buy taste for their children, or that it will come into existence suddenly, like Jack's beanstalk.

But in the realm of mind there is no mushroom aristocracy: every faculty has its antecedents. When nature has given to a family, as a reward for efforts toward self-culture, the fine sense of appreciation, its germ may exist within each individ-

ual soul; but a germ is only a possibility, not a power. To raise it to the distinction of a power what tender, fostering care is necessary, what patience, what zeal ! While the infant is yet lying in his cradle, his staring eyes half perceiving the ceil of the room, half reflecting some dream vision wrought on the inner retina, a sense of his surroundings sinks into his soul, which takes the cast set for it.

Give this young soul something beautiful to gaze upon. It has an inherent right to the surroundings nature lavishly makes lovely, even to the eyes of the poorest of her children. What are those daubs doing upon the nursery walls, and those grotesque, ugly toys on the durable but hideously patterned carpet ? If he is sensitive, nature will protect him by weaving over his eyes the film of indifference so that he will never learn to perceive, and in after years, when the world opens its rich and rare chambers to him, he will turn away into the outer hall in conscious awkwardness and ignorance.

The tender mother, delicately alive to every shade of disharmony in her own room, is surprisingly careless of the surroundings of her child. Anything that is bright, highly colored, striking, is deemed the appropriate ornament for the nursery. Just as the conversation of servants is the

preparation for his entrance to the drawing-room, where men and women whose intellectual gifts are their crowns will criticise him, the cheap ugliness of the refuse of the house fixes his taste. Shall we not treat our child as well as we treat our guest? If we have little, let us spare him what we can afford. If much, let us believe that it is no waste to bestow on him what we ourselves appreciate.

All the young Greeks were not rich. But beauty was a free gift to the poorest. Parents do not need wealth to give them power to educate the æsthetic sense, which is closely connected with the moral nature; they need faith and love. Did they respect the germ of taste in their child's soul, it would grow. The day would not then come when his vulgarity would shame their refinement. The time to begin this education is when the baby is just waking to a knowledge of his surroundings. His first glimpse of the world will give him his predisposition. Some fine engravings on the walls of his bedroom, some pretty color, were it cambric or calico, some graceful form to enchain his attention will be the simple means of developing in him that love of the beautiful which never dies.

Children who are left largely to themselves and allowed to draw deductions from facts without being choked by officious classifications at every turn, exhibit capacity to generalize. A kindergartener mentions that a little boy of six, whose faculties had been aroused by loving guidance, from a seemingly dormant state, surprised his father by the following observation: "Some things live and some things only keep." He thus distinguished between the life of animals and plants. An instance of a morbid phase of this power occurs in "Robert Elsmere," where Langdon, the delicate, large-eyed child, plaintively asks his mother, "Mamma, why is it I dislike the things I dislike so much more than I like the things that I like?" Although, happily, children do not often evince such melancholy power of self-analysis, instances will occur to most parents of some far-reaching remark made by their little ones, in total unconsciousness of its breadth of application.

## Picture-thinking

THE power of forming pictures in the mind's eye, or of visualizing, as it is called, is not only much greater with some persons than with others, but greater at some periods of life. It belongs particularly to youth. In some children it is very high and they have a difficulty in distinguishing between the objective and subjective world. Their dreams dwell in their memories as pictures so vivid that they can scarcely believe that they were not real happenings. The faculty of visualizing is a natural gift and runs in some families. The child of an emotional, fanciful mother or superstitious father will perhaps have a tendency toward picture-thinking, although in a less happy sort than if his parents were cultivated or talented as well as imaginative.

The ability to "think in pictures," with such facility that a whole scene can be readily represented, is the distinguishing mark of artistic talent. But it is accompanied by the disadvantage in early years of being mistaken for a tendency to exaggeration, and so is often disciplined to death. Na-



ture nearly always weights her fine spirits with some leaden impediment, perhaps that they shall gain strength by having something to overcome. But the fanciful or visualizing mind is apt to be of delicate fibre. Ridicule wounds it, harshness crushes it. So, few persons preserve unto their later years the vitality of imagination that was theirs in childhood.

Day-dreaming runs in families as night-dreaming does. Both are the work of the same faculties. By night the brain dreams because the creative faculty is awake, while the others are asleep, and wonderful absurdities are gravely rehearsed without exciting criticism, although sometimes it seems as if the person's judgment is roused to make a protest, and utters the cautionary remark, "This is a dream." But by day, when the imagination is active, it is held in check by reason.

The more prominent the reason the more it controls day-dreams. Children have little or no control over them, because their reasoning powers are feeble. Consequently a little one will see two swans in the park and report at home that he has seen a crowd of these feathered beauties; or, he will mingle the might-have-been with the has-been, and say that a troop of soldiers in gold uniforms passed by him yesterday. A tot of two years insisted that she saw two white elephants in the front

yard, where she was playing. Her mother was shocked at the falsehood. But who knows whether that little head did not droop for a few minutes under the sun's heat, and a sudden vision flash before her eyes. To infancy there is no possible or impossible; whatever can be conceived may come to pass.

The visions of the night often obtain such a strong hold on mature and sober minds that they cannot be shaken off even by the contact of practical, every-day matters. We are obliged to assure ourselves over and over again that this unsettling notion is but a dream. "Confirmation strong as holy writ" can scarce impress us with a sense of its unreality. It is much more difficult for a child to cast off the hallucination. He is less attached to facts; the world has not yet secured a strong hold upon him.

A little child must often be puzzled to decide what belongs only to his unreal life and what to his real, or to distinguish clearly between one and the other. He passes much of his time on the borderland between two worlds, and the puzzled, slowly recognizing look he sometimes gives you is when he is just awakening from a vision that has held his senses enchained. Occasionally he essays to describe something he has experienced, and is told that he has dreamed it. His clear eyes will

open with innocent wonder as he asks, "What is a dream?"

Some of us can recollect how, when illness had begun to fasten its hold upon our brains, we lay in bed and watched the figures on the ceiling take strange shapes and fantastic motions: how, when fever set in, sounds varied in intensity, the same kind of sound seeming at one instant low, and at another harsh, and now a succession of noises would drag along and suddenly whirl into a bewildering, rapid confusion. This mental discomfort outweighs with some sensitive sufferers severe physical pain, and those who have so suffered do not need assurance that the experience is very real to themselves, although almost incomprehensible to those who have not been through it.

It is probable that children whose minds are in the unstable period, and more easily thrown out of balance, go through more of these harassing experiences than grown people; but the discomfort being often of that subtle nature which makes a description of it impossible, they can only give vent to it by vague fretting. A feverish cold sometimes produces mild delirium, not always recognizable as such. One little child, apparently not very ill, seemed to her nurses to show unreasonable impatience and despondency, and was peremptorily silenced when making outcries and complaints

that no one understood. It was not till two years later, and when undergoing a recurrence of the same sickness, that she was able to express to her father a peculiar and very disagreeable phenomena which he recognized as one that he had himself suffered from when ill.

When a sick child shows restlessness under some slight annoyance, almost imperceptible to others, he should not be chided. Without being spoiled, this is yet a time for indulgence of whims. No one can say how much a thing is magnified by being passed through an invalid's lens. In fevers the senses are often preternaturally sharp: the ticking of a watch becomes unbearable, and the swaying to and fro of a curtain distorts the whole otherwise serene atmosphere. It is strange that a well person can scarcely recall his sensations while sick; never with vividness. But to a sick person the whole world seems ill. As everything which is true of grown people's fancies is even more intensely true of children, this is no exception. They often suffer more keenly from the riot of a disturbed imagination than any one who has forgotten his childhood can believe.

To fall down stairs with a baby is certainly an alarming experience. But few would have the presence of mind of this five-year-old. She had disobeyed orders in trying to carry him, and an awful sense of responsibility rushed over her as she fell. Scarcely, therefore, had she recovered breath, when she cried out, "Oh, auntie, baby is not hurt ! I kept him all the way on top !"

## The Little Mother

THE "good old times" were times of satisfaction and peace for the elder members of a family, and of anything but satisfaction to the younger members. The first son was the heir, the first daughter of more importance than succeeding ones. The mere fact of priority conferred an indisputable right to command service. The little ones waited upon the elder brother and sister and submitted unresistingly to their authority. Perhaps their turn came later, but so long as the family remained together the younger persons were "the children," with no settled or acquired rights, and their preferences were of the last consideration.

How changed is all this ! Sometimes it seems as if Justice, instead of keeping her scales equally balanced, merely absolves herself of the duty of fair play by giving free scope in one period to a certain set of people and in another period permitting another set to come uppermost. This is not only the day of the younger generation, but of the

*youngest* generation. "Baby is king." The elder brother and sister are his servants, whether willing or unwilling to accept that position. The affairs of the household are arranged upon the basis of his necessities, real or fancied, and in some instances he becomes the small tyrant of the tribe.

Departing from the metaphor, that some ruling fate is responsible for the condition mortals find themselves in, it must be admitted that we manifest, ordinarily, very little of that strict and impartial justice that is always so admirable in theory. Parents love "the line of least resistance." They are terrorized by something that has the faculty of noisy opposition, and find it easier to make more reasonable creatures give way to the less reasonable than to train the latter to make proper concessions.

The "Moloch of a baby," which one of our latter day writers has memorialized as the devourer of a devoted sister's happiness and strength, is, unhappily, no hero of fiction. In the households of the laboring class he is especially in evidence. It is often a necessity here for the child of eight or ten to become the nursery governess, the unpaid drudge, the slave of the tribe of younger ones. The mother who should take care of them is a wage-earner; the "little mother" must step into the vacant place.

The dreary lives of these poor little drudges excite deep compassion in the minds of the pitiful and sympathetic friends of children. But there is also much that is deserving of sympathy in the situation of the seniors in what are called refined and educated households, where the means, if not ample, are not so straitened as to make it essential for "little mothers" to exist. It is here not so often a matter of necessity as of convenience for the mother to delegate many of her own duties to the faithful and conscientious elder sister, who, when the baby first comes, is delighted to take care of it, not knowing how onerous the task may finally become.

Mothers do not always understand how heavily the sense of responsibility weighs upon a little girl of this earnest nature. When she is told "not to let anything happen to the baby" during her care of it, perhaps a whole afternoon or evening, she feels an excess of anxiety which no hireling would permit herself to be troubled by for a moment. This is partly through affection, but more through her feeling of inefficiency to prevent accident. She needs protection herself, and it is a strain upon her to become the protector of another. It is, of course, natural and proper that elder ones should assist in the care of the younger brothers and sisters, but a thoughtful parent will



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take care that the little assistant is not made the responsible guardian.

But the cross which is most generally imposed upon the "little big brother and sister" is to make them give up their property to the smaller ones. The baby cries for sister's French doll, and the careful owner, who has guarded it as the apple of her eye, is persuaded or commanded to let him have it, and the damage it sustains in consequence is the reward of her sacrifice. Would mamma give baby her watch to play with? Yet she asks brother to let him have the soldiers or the dominoes, and if the set is spoiled she forgets to console. She will let ruthless little fingers meddle with the neatly kept playhouse or book-shelf, because it is too much trouble to prevent the pillage. It is not a wonder that sometimes the affection of the seniors in a family is turned to bitterness, and they wish the baby had never come to make havoc of their pleasure and comfort.

This tyranny of the younger faction is the swinging back of the pendulum. Babies are having their day. But let us hope that the intelligence of parents in this age will harmonize the interests which have, in ruder times, so conflicted, and by the exercise of a finer sense of justice bring about a system of equality in the household. Every child has natural rights which should never be sub-

ordinated to the claims of brother or sister. All should rank alike in the parents' eyes, and the happiness of the large one and the tiny one be at all times the subject of equal consideration.

Beecher, who possessed one of those marvellously sympathetic temperaments which enabled him to enter acutely into the feelings of children, remarked, when talking of the melancholy which sometimes attacks them: "There is no such lonesomeness as that the young feel before they have applied their powers in life and vindicated their place in society. It is dreariness." Persons who have forgotten this period in their lives may be reminded of it through association where they experience that feeling which comes to most of us sometimes: a longing for a home in the world, for a particular niche, a place and a function peculiarly our own. Sympathy, not cold reproof, ought to visit a child who is passing through this stage of his existence.

## An Inevitable Separation

"FAMILY likeness has often a deep sadness in it. Nature, that great tragic dramatist, knits us together by bone and muscle, and divides us by the subtler web of our brains." There comes to us suddenly, at times, a strange sense of aloofness from one we regard as especially like ourselves. The child who has stood learning his lessons at his mother's knee, looks up at her one day with a whole world of new feeling in his eyes, and in the quickening of latent powers she has not suspected he becomes a new being, one whom she can no longer wholly comprehend.

He is her own boy still: there are the same eyes; the same trick of that curl of the lips, and the very motion of the hand, by which he for the first time makes dissent from her opinion, proclaim him one of her kith and kin. And yet they are divided; for some instinct from this hour draws him along in a path of thinking which she has never entered and could not enter. The stirring of blood in his veins which is not hers, but his father's, gives him a separate life. Mentally isolated, the same roof covers them, and at table, at the hearth, every-

where, the obligations of family relationship seem to entreat for an intimacy of the inner life which cannot exist.

Parents resent the inevitable hour of mental separation. This is the real flight of the young bird from the home nest; the going out into the world with untried pinions which flutter obedient to some ambition coming down from a grandmother who is dust. The going off to school, the entrance into business is not the radical change. The mother does not lose her boy when he goes to college, nor her daughter the day she marries her. Could she but know it, the loss took place years ago, in that hour when there flashed up in the clashing of two diverse natures the spark of dissension destined to become a settled unlikeness of feeling and opinion, lasting for life.

Can one lose what he never had? How much there is about our children that does not belong to us, that will ever remain to us a mystery! There is a *must* in all those characteristics we think strange, which impels them to take issue against our wishes. The strings which in us and in them are of like fibre will always vibrate in unison. But there are others, meant to make music not for our ears, and with which we have naught to do.

Traits which seem alike are often as dissimilar as the varieties of rose which own the same

hedge plant for ancestor, but neither exhale in themselves the same perfume, nor glow with the same hues. The father thinks his son possessed of his own will power, and refrains from coercing the boy, who astounds him by showing later the peevish flicker of narrow prejudice and obstinacy, instead of the steady heat of devotion to a principle. Maternal complacency is flattered by the exhibition on the part of the baby daughter of a certain precocity and propriety of expression which promises to reproduce madame's own social tact, and lo ! the girl's little gift blossoms out into one of those rare talents of eloquence which announce her unmistakably a leader among an earnest and aspiring circle of workers, whose aims and ideas are as remote as the poles from those of her mother. Dare we pretend to claim, while they are yet in the germ, faculties and passions whose end our wildest imagination cannot presage ! There is a law of variation, but as yet no one knows what it is. Until we know it, let us look reverently upon unexpected and startling departures from parental stock.

In the diary of a young girl of thirteen occurred this remarkable sentence: "At least, there is one thing I have now that I shall not have when I am older and my life has become fixed; I have hope and anticipation, for while the future is before me and all is uncertain, anything may happen; even my sweetest dreams may come true." The child unwittingly touched upon the one great mental difference between youth and maturity, the buoyancy and enthusiasm of the former, as contrasted with the more sombre reflections natural to a period of life when reverie brings to the present hour fetters to chain aspirations and teach the pitiless limitations of hope. Childhood should be cheerful, because it has no past to look back upon. Encourage its rosy dreams, instead of croaking in its ears. The longer youthful enthusiasm can be made to last, the better for the world.

## Cheerfulness

CHEERFULNESS is the one essential condition in a child's social atmosphere. Loving order, he can endure slovenliness; appreciating beautiful surroundings, he can reconcile himself to a bare room where the plaster is crumbling and the boards splinter under his feet; and with a heart craving for tenderness and sympathy, he can put this natural longing, in a great measure, out of his mind, if only the people about him are a contented, merry set, given to making the best of life.

Has it not been remarked over and over again that a child delicately bred and used to refined company, will steal out of the parlor and sit by the hour on a hard chair in the kitchen, only for the chance of hearing the unrestrained hilarities that prevail there? It is not so much a desire for unrefined society as a longing for something hearty and jovial. The subdued tones and gently plaintive modulations of the cultivated part of the household often produce in him a nameless depression. The atmosphere is laden with a dead weight of experiences too lofty for him to comprehend and pervaded with a certain quality of prudent dis-



trust and reserve that tortures him by its continual suggestion that life is not what he wants it to be and what it seems natural to him that it should be, but a sort of lesson to be learned with pain and dissatisfaction. What a contrast is the open-hearted kitchen with its commonplace, happy-go-lucky inmates, and its bustle of every-day occupation ! If the cook is a good-tempered woman, and the maids, as they are wont to be, young, vivacious, and talkative, the child is apt to desire, as the one did who was promised a sojourn among the immaculate angels, " a chance to frolic with the little devils every Saturday night ! "

But not only is a cheerful household atmosphere conducive to a child's happiness, but it helps him to be good. Optimism attracts him irresistibly, and he will attach himself with ardor to the person who has a genial smile and a pleasant word for everybody; who seems to believe that the world is a good place, on the whole, and the men and women in it well-meaning people. Whenever a child's judgment of character is deceived, and he is fascinated by a person totally unworthy, it will be found that the evil in this nature was overbalanced by the magic of cheerfulness. Happiness magnetizes him, and he will become enslaved, even, by the person who radiates satisfaction and merriment. So the father and mother whose men-

tal tone is that of ordinary contentment, and who generally "look on the bright side," have little trouble in governing their children. As they expect the best, they get it. It is a matter of course that the younger members of the family feel constrained to live up to the standard of the elders.

It is not enough to be sincere, industrious, and law-abiding members of the community to secure the welfare of our children. We must also be at least satisfied and hopeful, if not happy. There is a great deal of inevitable misery in the world, and many innocent victims, but—the miserable should not have children. Gloom and despondency are the parents of turpitude and desperation. The constitutionally depressed person, the one given to "megrimms" and who "meets trouble half-way" should consider it a most solemn duty to guard against the possibility of offspring. There is no doubt that children whose heritage dates from a period of melancholy and clouded spirits in their parents will enter upon life not only predisposed to gloom, but to rebellion against law and discipline.

There are some well-meaning persons in the world who seem expressly constituted for the torment and destruction of the younger generation. One such person in a household—it may be an aunt or a grandmother, or an elderly friend—can work more harm in an hour than months can undo. She comments upon the children's appearance, upon their mood, their manner: if they are grave, she admonishes them; if they are merry, she either restrains or admires; no look or word can pass without remark, and her attentions have the effect of making the children self-conscious and embarrassed to a degree. There is a certain tormenting little game that children play with each other which this recalls. One girl will watch another sharply, and if the first raises her hand she calls out, "That's right, miss, I want you to do so;" if she closes her eyes or bobs her head, again comes the refrain, "Go on, don't stop; I like to see you bob your head," and so on, until the victim is almost frantic. But why should elderly persons play these pranks? It shows a great want of wit and penetration.

## A Family Tyrant

IN many houses there is at least one inmate who has had his or her lines cast among unpleasant places in this world, and who exhales bitterness, or at least mild misery. Such a person can poison the whole atmosphere; all the grown people catch more or less of the infection, and the child's horizon is completely overcast. A moment's jollity is followed by swift recollection of the awful responsibilities and cares that press heavily. Some one is ready to check mirth as if it were contraband. "Don't be foolish," would-be wisdom admonishes. Among the colored people of the South is an old aphorism which they din into the ears of the young: "Yo' is eatin' yer white bread now, child, yo' is seein' yer best days; make de mos' of 'em." This warning is sufficient to pull up the sprightliest reveller and make him thoughtful.

Equally to be dreaded is that too common factor of some households, a perfectly self-engrossed personage impressed with the idea that he is the centripetal force of all family life; that its machinery

is to move faster or slower in accurate interpretation of his wishes. Sometimes this tyrant is the mother herself, ruling the family through her languid peevishness. Voices must be lowered to whispers, only such dishes prepared as suit her own fancies; people are to come and go at her convenience. The absolute sovereignty of such a woman, fortified against rebuke by a triple layer of vanity, is well illustrated in the character of Rosamond, in the novel "Middlemarch." But more often it is some pampered son who plays this part of family tyrant. His appearance is the signal for a little flutter of anxiety, a redistribution of affairs; every one is made slightly uncomfortable lest he should fail to be comfortable. In an English household the elder son is mounted at birth upon this pedestal, and doting sisters and subservients conspire to feed his exalted opinion of his own importance.

It is but just to American men to say that they are seldom objects of terror in their households. And yet in proportion to the rarity with which they assume this position is their complete assumption of it upon occasion. There is an old saying that spoiled sons make bad husbands. They also make bad heads of households. Unhappy beyond comparison is that family dominated over by a man who in his boyhood had everything give way to him, and who has grown up in the profound belief

that upon his preservation depends largely the welfare of the race. His egotism is thus sanctioned, and knows no limits. "In our presence," says Mrs. Stowe's heroine, the pretty and imperious Eva Van Arsdale, "men have got to give over absorbing, and begin radiating." But our egoist who sits in the midst of the family as an embodied representation of POWER condescends to no such necessity. There are two types: the talking dogmatist and the silent egoist, whose taciturnity is subject to outbreaks of temper and relapses into sullenness. The presence of the former embitters others and rouses them to rebellion; that of the latter freezes sensitive natures and crushes spontaneity. The habit of cheery interchanges, of interested and interesting talk is not only lost, but the reservoirs of expression seem to dry up. The meeting together of members of the family becomes a mockery. Each one feels his own insignificance. His individuality is stunned, and waits to regain itself under new conditions.

There are, of course, certain natures which are inherently lacking in any capacity for expansion; thin, bloodless beings marked out by destiny for conventual isolation. They may be drawn out if their friends have sufficient vitality to expend for the purpose, and sometimes these efforts are rewarded by a glow of thankfulness, an outburst of

devotion. The mind that has been living a frozen, starved existence has reason to be grateful to the benefactor who opens its prison and lets in warmth and light. So the spectacle is not uncommon of a warm-blooded, vivid creature followed and attended by a hypnotized satellite who seems to live in the radiance cast by the richer nature. The attachments of children are frequently of this sort. The child who is physically or mentally weak is strongly attracted to an imperious, brilliant comrade upon whom he lavishes an affection little short of worship.

A parent who has this gift of magnetism may be as imperious as he pleases and yet be loved; for with such a nature he is sure to possess a social disposition which makes him desire the sympathy and companionship of his family. He needs love, seeks it, and obtains it. But there are no half-way houses in the road of human relations; we must either fulfil our obligations to others or neglect them. We must either make our associates happy, or be responsible for the denial of the happiness we might have wrought for them. So the unpardonable offence is self-sufficiency; that cold, cruel aloofness which 'holds others at a distance, and makes even a kindness conferred appear a perfunctory, unwilling concession. As "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," so the self-

engrossment of a strong, powerful nature competent to create sunshine for all about him, becomes a dread paralysis which extends to the outermost rim of his family circle.



A great improvement in the temper of children will take place when average parents substitute for two time-honored, cold-blooded phrases two other more natural ones. Suppose, instead of a continual "Keep quiet" and "Keep clean," should be said cheerfully, "Run about freely," and "Never mind clothes, they can be washed." This would be a new Magna Charta to many tormented little creatures. In reality, fragile clothing that must be continually thought of is as much a straight jacket as the old-fashioned wooden things called by that name. If we could give our little ones the aboriginal covering of feathers or fur to grow up in, they would be happy and healthy; since we cannot, let us give them waterproof and homespun. And never torture them by that cruel refrain, "Keep clean."

## Energy and Temper

NOTHING is more misunderstood in children, nor more injudiciously dealt with, than what is called temper. Really temper is in itself nothing more than a form of energy, a vehemence in acting. Stephen Girard is said to have preferred as clerks men with strong tempers, and when he met one he would employ him and set him to work in a room by himself; his opinion being that such men were the most efficient, and that their energy would spend itself in work when removed from the temptation to quarrel.

An irascible disposition, however, is rather different from the vehement self-will ordinarily called temper. It is usually an accompaniment of physical weakness, and has to be met by the same kind of tact a nurse exercises toward her patient; while, on the contrary, a strong temper is irritated by such soothing methods. What it requires is a chance to work off its overplus of force; it wants to charge at something, to storm a fortress, strike heavy blows, and be put in a position calling for precision and directness. Persons of this character are usually good shots, fearless riders, and know

how to command soldiers. In other words, strong temper is a kind of courage, a natural instinct to dominate the situation. It becomes passion when every other outlet for it is suppressed.

What should be done with a child possessed of this self-will is to put him at some work calling for muscular effort. If a boy, let him split kindling, make a fence, drive nails, run the errands; and let his playthings be something that he can put through motions—rocking-horses, swings, tools. It is unwise to make him perform labor, either physical or mental, that is monotonous in character. "The Arab barb makes a bad roadster." Many children that are now daily punished for some manifestation of *ill* temper would be admired for their bright and sunny natures, if they were not driven to sullenness by having all their faculty for exertion hampered, and their fighting instinct wrongly aroused by opposition. The instinct of self-assertion is a proper one, in itself. Judiciously trained, it becomes capacity for overcoming difficulties, not exactly after the meek and patient manner of perseverance, but with a sort of fiery resolution. Men and women of this character have their place in the world and are indispensable in some emergencies. They usually begin life with a large capacity for both love and hate, and either may be brought out by their early education.

We may develop in a child a fairly strong feeling of hatred by beginning while he is yet in the cradle to thwart his will for the sake of teaching him submission. Strong natures never can learn to submit except to two things: the force of circumstances, and love. One golden rule of the nursery is: avoid personal encounters. Rancor is a century-plant; it may blossom but once in an age, but it lives and grows while it seems dull and past blooming. A fight between parent and child leaves scars that no soothing touches of kindness can quite efface, and whoever conquers loses something that never should have been jeopardized—his respect for the character of the other. For the instant we cease to respect we begin to despise and tyrannize. It is so with parent, as with child.

In the life of almost every adult there has come an hour when, with voice of anguish, he has uttered a protest, bitter and prolonged, against some over-ruling, unmitigable destiny. The deepest faith trembles to its foundation at the shock of some happening which apparently could only be dictated by a malignant power. Injustice paralyzes. The faculties refuse to act in that freezing air. The whole nature falls into a state of despondency, and only recuperates when its confidence in the existence of an impartial law is restored. No man is so misanthropic as one

whom accumulated misfortunes has driven to a belief in his ill luck; and most persons would find great griefs insupportable but for the alleviating trust that what seems for the time wholly evil contains an element of benevolence. Men and women are seldom brought directly face to face with the real thing that unjustly dominates them. Circumstances—and not a master—stop their course, and to circumstances they find it possible to submit when it would not be possible to yield to a personal force.

This consternation, felt when the results of our endeavors are disappointing, and when it seems as if we deserved better things of Providence, is the feeling that comes with crushing force upon children many times during the subjective period of their lives. Instead of the vague and invisible mastery of circumstances, they have before them real, tangible masters in their parents. Not only are their actions controlled, but their motives are judged, their impulses are interpreted. Parents are like society; they draw positive conclusions, and whether they are right ones or erroneous ones, there is no appeal from them.

So long as parents judge justly and act fairly the children feel in their oversight only that pleasant protection which confers a sense of peace and safety. They rest happily under a paternal, benefi-

cent government. But what confusion they fall into when this justice they confide in shows itself to be harsh, hasty, and selfish; when they are accused of intentions they never dreamed of, and when their mistakes or peccadilloes are magnified into deliberate acts of wickedness. They stand silent, or make bewildered protests, finding no words to voice the grief and despair that fill their hearts. Their beneficent providence has turned into a cruel fate, and they go forth from that day with the seeds of doubt in their minds ready to sprout into the full bloom of bitter despondency upon the next first occasion.

It is not possible for parents to be always just; that is to be omniscient. But since they are fallible they should limit themselves in the exercise of their power. Only a being entirely perfect can safely be trusted with absolute power. A parent should train himself to be deliberate, to pause and say to himself, "I may be mistaken, things may not be as they seem; appearances are against the child, still, in intent and purpose he may be innocent. I will suspend my judgment."

He will be able then to recollect that in judging a child the one sort of proof nearly always employed is circumstantial evidence. Among adults this is always allowed to be more or less uncertain, and so far as regards motive it is decidedly so. And

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a child's motives are what must chiefly be considered. His acts are often but vague and faulty expressions of his aims. Large allowance ought to be made for his lack of adaptability. He often fails to do what he fully intended to do, and accomplishes something less desirable. Are adults, with all their experience, exempt from this tendency to blunder? The tendency is far greater in a child. But even when parents are convinced that their child has intentionally offended them, let them recall their own sensations when they have deliberately gone against their convictions of what is right. They hope that a beneficent Providence will not deal with them according to their deserts, but will temper justice with mercy. We should deal with children according to their deserts; for their own sake it must be done. Yet, let us temper justice with mercy.

A comical instance of most unconscious childish egotism is the following: It was on the occasion of a steamer excursion down the Potomac River, that, on the return voyage, when about a quarter of a mile from land, the wheel broke and the boat was compelled to lie motionless in midstream till morning, when a tug arrived and towed her to land. The night was burning hot, and as it was a day boat there were no sleeping accommodations for the three hundred passengers, who consequently reclined around on the decks and wore out the night as they could. Some one started a song, and this suggested a series of glees which were proceeding with considerable liveliness when there came an odd little interruption. Three-year-old Horace, accustomed to all the luxuries of downy couch and absolute quiet when it was his sovereign pleasure to sleep, found the improvised bed on the cabin sofa and the oil lamps insupportable. When the singing began it was the drop too much. Suddenly his small figure appeared in the doorway of the cabin, outlined against the brightness within, and as he peered forth onto the dark decks, his clear little treble rang out in the most reproachful accents: "Mamma! I can't go to sleep in all this noise!" And then there was an amazed pause of a few seconds, succeeded by a shout of laughter from the offending three hundred, which made the young prince retreat in indignant confusion.



## Baby Wants a Corner

THE common experience is that baby and his belongings spread all over the house. The *little* baby is, in truth, a sort of octopus, with arms that embrace every quarter. But despite these aggressions—for which he is himself not to blame—he has no hold upon any locality, but is moved hither and thither, dislodged without notice, and hunted from pillar to post as if his small presence and his small properties were inflictions to be shaken off whenever chance offers. And if at one year he is considered a nuisance, at two he is an interloper, without permanent privilege or the least tenure of possession upon any spot in the house.

This is true of the majority; there are exceptionally favored individuals, young princes of the blood, born into command of a miniature kingdom. But the baby belonging to the average household, none too large for the wants of father and mother, and perhaps the big brother and sister, has no settled locality, and must wage a sort of guerilla warfare on his inhospitable relations in behalf of his dolls, his wagons, his blocks, and his books.

No one knows (who has not been a baby) how bleak the world is to a baby who has no little home of his own; no tiny realm within the larger one, toward which his heart can turn with a thrill of pride and thankfulness such as older people feel in their own domain. Baby wants a nook that he can call all his own, a corner of which he is lord and proprietor, that he can picture in his mind when absent from it, as sure to be just in the condition he left it. What pleasant memories and thoughts cluster about such a spot we outsiders can scarcely guess. We are not wont to give him credit for much sentiment. But we have seen a certain little toddler who was made the happy lord of such a corner, large enough to hold a low table and chair and box of toys, rush in from his morning walk, and before mittens or bonnet could be removed, peer into his drawer and search for every pencil and other possession, to see that everything was undisturbed.

And another mite, a girl of three, who was provided when on a visit with some toys, made herself a miniature bedroom in a corner of the parlor, and could only be prevailed upon to leave when the assurance was given that she should find the things in the same place when she came again. On the way home she asked her mother twice, "Mamma, will my bureau be there when I go back?"

Surely in all but the poorest households a niche can be spared for baby. Let him have his low chair and tiny table, with a shelf for his toys, and regard his tenant right as sacred. Do we want our children to be honest and fair in their dealings? Then let us give them a chance to acquire just views early. What can a mother expect who tells her child sternly, as a mother was overheard saying to her little girl the other day: "It makes no difference what *you* want!" And there was a scornful accent on the pronoun which must have aroused a thrill of bitter resentment in that young heart, humiliated so unnecessarily.

It does make a difference what the child wants, all the difference in the world; for suppressed desires do not die, they only lie hid till the time comes when they can obtain satisfaction. It is our duty to try and lead our child to want the right things. And to this end we ought to gratify his natural and innocent preferences. He comes to us a guest, ready to be sweet and kind and gracious in the measure of our being so to him. Let us welcome him and make him, as we aim to make our older visitors—at home.

One of the things happily hid from us is a knowledge of the twists and knots made in our characters by the struggles undergone early in life. It is customary to say, with some complacency, "I had a pretty hard time in my young days, but I haven't made the worse man (or woman) for it." How do we know that? Perhaps we were made narrow, unsympathetic, selfish, by the very trials that seemed to have left no mark. Adversity tells against the plant, against the animal, and it does not let man escape without hurt. The doctrine of misery being good for people, is exploded. Happiness is good for them, and there is no need to wish for hardships for our children to develop their character. As well wish that they should stand perpetually with rain beating on their uncovered heads so they might be hardened against a possible storm. There is no better bulwark against the inevitable miseries in an adult's life than the mental health built up from a carefully guarded and happy childhood. Strains made then tell on us in some way in maturity, surely, though we do not know it.

## Nothing Lasts but Love

NOTHING more forcibly betrays the lack of a good understanding between a child and his parents than the sort of conduct in public which is sometimes called "taking advantage." In the cars, in the street, in places of amusement, there are perpetual manifestations of this wayward spirit, and the observer is led sometimes to wonder at the patience and forbearance of parents who endure teasing and defiance of advice with seemingly unruffled equanimity.

Why is it that the child who is somewhat upon his guard about giving offence when at home, becomes a veritable imp of perversity in public? It must be because he derives a sense of security from the presence of spectators. He has learned that his mother or father has a "company manner," that the pleasant voice and smile that go with outdoor garments will not lightly be exchanged for frowns and reproaches. The simplicity of a two-year-old child penetrates the secret of that conventional law which obliges persons to restrain themselves when under observation, and with infantile lack of foresight he trusts to his parents'

bad memory as an escape from the reckoning whisperingly promised.

The only real security we can have that our child will not become a cause of uneasiness and mortification when strangers are present to protect him from punishment, is in the possession of his friendship and good will. Is it too great a condescension for a parent to be on really friendly relations with his child, to lay aside that cumbersome "dignity of office" which interferes with his kindly intentions, and rely upon personal influence and affection to bring about what is best, instead of upon a dread authority? It is not going too far to say that whenever a child is led to do right through fear of punishment only, he might as well, so far as concerns the effect upon his own character, do wrong. We should aim to reach his heart, and not stop with consideration of his conduct; for when we have controlled him in this or that act we cannot be sure that the next turn of circumstances will not lead him toward evil-doing; but if we have succeeded in gaining his confidence so that he believes our advice to have a foundation of sincerity and kindness, he will seek to know our opinion upon all matters, and prefer to be guided by it.

Force can never be anything but a temporary restraint. It may be necessary in the case of hope-

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less criminals, but in family life it is the worst mode of government. Even for the parent himself it is inconvenient and exhausting, for he must be ever upon the alert to check encroachment, vigilant to restrain, prompt to punish. Upon the theory that he is the autocrat of the household, and that a thing must be done because he wills it—not because it is right—are built all those heart-burnings and suspicions which make intercourse between elders and children a condition of active hostility or armed peace. No wonder that public exhibitions of childish rebellion and parental battles are common, when mutual respect is lacking. Let that once be well established, and there would be an end to bickering and argument, and all the distressing scenes that are now but too common.

The love of privilege is natural to all children. Whether the thing granted as a favor is particularly agreeable or not, it is seized upon with avidity. We all remember how Mark Twain's inimitable "Tom Sawyer" sold out his job of white-washing which his aunt had meant as a punishment, to several of his friends at the price of marbles, tops, and pen-knives. Truly, every one wants what is hard to get. Some teachers wisely make use of this human trait for purposes of government. I recollect, in the days when I was a very small child indeed, at what was then called an infant-school, that there was in one corner of the room a dilapidated wooden armchair whose occupancy was dearly coveted by all the pupils. But its temporary possession was always granted to "the good child." When some forenoon's exemplary conduct had won for me the favor of this throne during the hour succeeding recess, with what a swelling heart did I look around upon the other children! It was not gratification at my own virtue, it was that I was doing something different from all the rest. The chair was not comfortable; it was hard, it was slippery, one leg was too short. But its occupant was distinguished!



## Pleasures of Ownership

IN order to arouse in our children an interest in their daily work about the house and garden it is well to give them some proprietorship in things. Unhappily, arrangements are often such that several children have to occupy sleeping-rooms together. The better way, and one which ought to be pursued in every case where it is possible, is for each child to have a room, however small, to himself. And it should be his sanctuary—the place where his possessions could be perfectly secure, and privacy possible to him whenever he desires it.

If this is not feasible, perhaps there is some old lumber-room that may be made over to the children's use, where each may have a particular niche. Or—special delight!—there may be a garret, cobwebby and littered with a heterogeneous collection of trash, that he may convert into a theatre for his exploits.

It is curious what a hold space has upon the youthful imagination. There is a craving for fields and pastures, woods and a stream, all its own.

A child is instinctively a landholder. When he is able to comprehend such distinctions it is more or less of a shock to him to be made aware that his parents are tenants and do not own their home. He suffers a loss of self-respect, and his father loses dignity in his eyes. But the best thing that can be done for him is to give him a slip of ground, making over the right of it to him so far as we can do so. In his present pleasure he loses sight of future contingencies, and his little heart swells with the pride of possession.

This is especially applicable to boys in the country. Farmers' sons might not be so anxious to leave home and seek city life if they were allowed to feel a personal interest in their fathers' farms, and had liberty to experiment and carry out some of their own plans. Girls enjoy gardening, but it is natural that their desire for land-owning should be less strong than their sense of appropriation of a portion of the house. While they are very small, say six or eight years old, they will be delighted to take upon themselves a small part of the household responsibility; and a judicious mother will take advantage of this pliable period to cultivate in her daughters a liking for domestic pursuits.

No cooking school or sewing school can equal an old-fashioned home kitchen, where the mother

herself sets the example of industry, and gives instructions in methodical work. But the children's interest will be greatly enhanced by being made owners of their utensils and implements. Give to one the charge of the Sunday tea when Bridget is out, and present her with a little teapot and tea-kettle with the understanding that she is to take care of them. Let another small maid have a paraphernalia for cake-making, and another one a dust-brush and carpet-sweeper.

We cannot expect children to like work for its own sake any better than we do ourselves; but they can at least be prevented, by judicious management, from conceiving a distaste for the work that they will certainly find necessary sometime in their lives, and they will have a chance to acquire ideas of methodical management, which ideas are lamentably lacking in many of our young-lady graduates from cooking classes and parlor lectures upon kitchen work.

Industry is a cardinal virtue in a man or woman, and the early signs of it in a child ought to be encouraged. The perpetual repression it is deemed needful to make him undergo, and that really is essential to the comfort of grown people under our ordinary arrangements, has the effect of converting a bright and active child into a stupid and indolent one. What a mortal pity it is that in this vast world

there is so little room for the majority of children to expand into perfect childhood ! They are born into an environment fatal to their health and happiness, where such incessant activity as is natural to young animals is a nuisance, and hearty frolicking a social crime. But let us do the best we can for them, and give them some opportunities to use their legs, arms, and lungs.

The children of our day are not repressed in the same way that the children of a former age were, but they are in danger of being drilled to death. Some sage observers complain that spontaneity and frankness are dying out, but that is only a repetition of criticisms which Socrates made. These charming qualities are always on the point of vanishing before the approach of systematized culture, but they are still with us, because they are born afresh with every child. They belong to a period of life. All that we have to do is to give them a little room,

The singular notion most mothers have that the teachers have entire charge of the systematic education of their children is shown by their letting the long summer vacations pass without an effort to advance in knowledge the young persons whom they seem to regard as wards of the school. "The poor things are tired of books, let them rest," is the excuse for this neglect. Tired of books, yes; but are they tired of learning? Can they stop learning even if they wish? Will these two or three months pass in positive stagnation, leaving no trace on their minds? On the contrary, the mind, if less energetic, is more impressionable in warm weather, and, while our children are supposed to be resting or running wild, they are storing up many ideas and growing every day mentally as well as physically. A little orderly instruction, pleasantly given, would be a boon to them. Let the indolent mother rouse herself and think of some study that can be taken up as a pastime. It is not necessary to bring in books, unless the mother herself knows too little to teach without them. But it certainly is a reflection upon an intelligent parent to send a child back to school after three months of her own society, knowing no more than he did when he came home.

## The Moral Sense

THERE can be no invariable age set for a child to begin school. Many considerations individual to each child must be taken into account. But in general, and provided the home training is what it should be, the later he begins the better. One of the most highly cultured men I know has spent but seven years of his life at school, and five of those were at a foreign university. He escaped the long, tedious drill that most of us are compelled to undergo, through happily having a mother capable of conducting his early education. Not all mothers are able or have the time to devote themselves to this noble work, but that case is indeed deplorable when the child is given over to the care of others merely because the mother finds his training a burden.

In no case should a tot under seven be sent to a regular school. If there is no kindergarten convenient, let the baby run at large, supervised by his parents, in his experimentations. In these days, when science primers abound and books upon

natural history are made so entertaining, there is scarcely any excuse for a mother's not acquainting herself with the lore that above all others attracts and enchains children. Natural history is the basis of rational education. But it should be rationally taught. Do not puzzle a small child with fine-spun distinctions nor burden his memory with mere names. What he wants is to find out what things *are*, what they are made of, and their uses. If he is encouraged to investigate and allowed to collect plants, minerals, and what he calls "pretty things," he will be placed at the beginning of his life in right relations with nature; will learn to regard study as a delightful process, instead of a task; and will early begin to exercise his faculties for himself, instead of clinging weakly and blindly upon the knowledge of others.

In one of Miss Alcott's sensible books—"The Rose in Bloom," I think—there is a delightful little episode in the baby foundling's life, when her guardian, a college youth of more than ordinary judgment, brings the child pocketfuls of pine cones, fairy mosses, and shells and bits of glittering quartz as playthings, that she may begin her acquaintance with life from the natural and not the artificial standpoint. Of course the lisping tot will ask questions that will be harder to answer than the talk suggested by the ordinary playthings that imi-

tate the every-day life. And the mother should be prepared to meet her little one on its own ground. Any intelligent woman can with a little diligence learn enough of natural history to constitute herself the companion and teacher of her young children. And if the task is not congenial—and strangely enough, it is not always congenial—she will have her reward in an increase of influence and authority. Children submit readily to those who are wise in the matters they care most about, and they willingly and lovingly defer to those who give them sympathy and comradeship in their work and play.

The two cardinal points in the education of Persian lads in the time of Cyrus were “to draw the bow and to speak the truth.” The essentials of physical education have changed with the passage of centuries, but we have not improved, nor is it possible to improve, upon the moral code so long ago adopted and regarded as fundamental. Truthfulness is the root from which grow all beauties and graces of character. It is impossible to be truthful and be otherwise bad, for badness is accompanied by self-delusion, and the person who is accustomed to face the truth is made aware every moment of his exact standing, and can no more shun self-knowledge than he can deceive others. Experienced educators say that they never despair of a



naughty child unless he is a confirmed liar. The child who meets your eye boldly and directly, who "owns up" unflinchingly, is amenable to reason and can be won by candor and justice. But I am not sure that truthfulness is a virtue natural to all temperaments. Certainly it is necessary to cultivate it in the germ, and the first wavering impulses a child shows towards honest and candid conduct should be tenderly encouraged, and the roughness and brusqueness which are apt to appear at the same time with definitive honesty, pruned and smoothed without injuring the perfect bloom beneath the burrs.

We should aid children to understand and appreciate truth. One way in which this can be done is by insisting upon accurate statements. The habit of repeating a message in the precise words in which it was given, of describing locations and circumstances with absolute fidelity, is of great value. In childhood each single impression is vivid enough, but relations are confused. We should help a child to bring order into all this confusion of sights and sounds; show him how events are connected one with another, and that the world does not move by him, as he supposes, like a wild merry-go-round, but proceeds according to fixed laws. If he realizes that things have a regular manner of moving, he will see that there is a regu-

lar way of describing them, and that careless, loose, exaggerated language is not capable of conveying the right impression.

But we are ourselves responsible for much of the exaggeration that children indulge in. They catch up our superlatives, and build their notions upon our ecstasies and prejudices. If grown people would cut out two-thirds of the adjectives from their ordinary conversation, children would think more clearly and talk more simply. And it would also be well if the little ones were not obliged to hear arguments and discussions. When the persons a child most respects contradict one another, it is apparent to him that somebody is wrong—in other words, “tells a story”; and he goes out feeling that it is not important how he states a thing, since there are several ways of stating all matters.

Ah, let us take great pains not to bewilder a little child's moral sense ! We may excuse the transparent, innocent romancing which makes many mothers uneasy. This telling of fairy-tales is a natural phase of life, and all imaginative children pass through it. The important point is to teach the child never to say a thing with the deliberate intention of deceiving; and if this is to be accomplished we must never deceive him in the smallest particular, never break a promise made to him, nor allow him to break one to us. But we must be

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merciful about exacting promises, for to an inexperienced little one everything is possible, and he is eager to engage himself for what he may not be able to perform.

Has any mother ever thought of a "picture diary" for her child? Most children are fond of recalling events, and this little device affords possibilities both of entertainment and profit. Let the mother take a blank composition book and have a bottle of mucilage and a pen ready. Every evening have the child bring something, a leaf, a fern, a daisy, or a bit of ribbon that it has worn during the day—anything that can serve to recall the day's experience—and paste it at the head of a page, writing the date and a few words of explanation below it. What a treasure it will be in long winter evenings, and how many stories can be told over again of the little trips and excursions, the "tea parties on the big rock," and all the other enjoyments of the past months! With a little ingenuity a mother can enlarge upon this suggestion and furnish the child with an inexhaustible journal of his experience, which will cultivate his memory and help him entertain his young friends.

## An Office of Motherhood

A GOOD deal of "straining at gnats" is going on at present among educators, which is the reason, perhaps, why some old-fashioned duties are overlooked.

The first natural duty of a mother is to protect her young: to create around it a shelter in the midst of which the tender thing can grow, secure from shocks, and seeing and hearing only what is good for it to see and hear. Nature's evident intention is to give a newly born creature into the hands of the mother as one able and willing to make for it a soft, warm nest, where no disturbing agent can enter to work harm. The mother who goes away, except under dire necessity, and leaves her little one unprotected, is a deserter, whether she belongs to the bear or seal family or to that privileged portion of the human family admitting membership in a fashionable club.

Our progress from simple living to our present state has increased the obligations of motherhood. The more dangers threatening, the greater necessity for watchfulness; the more highly strung and sensitive the child, the more need for an exercise of

maternal care to ward off everything liable to disturb nerves so finely attuned that a slight jar may cause a lasting shock.

It is often thought that the first year of life is such a vegetative period that any moderately decent person may supervise the uninteresting infant past the staring, drooling stage, and the intelligent mother, fitted by education for higher uses, take charge of it when the fluttering efforts at imitation of grown-up associates give warning that more artistic models than the nurses of its infancy should be supplied.

But this is a mistake. The human infant is, to be sure, usually born deaf and blind, and is divided at first by the wall of its inert senses from the world it enters; although there are instances where careful prenatal training has had the effect of advancing foetal development greatly. In one case a baby girl showed that she could hear when but eleven hours old, manifested sensitiveness to light at three hours, and when five days old had gained a perfect understanding of the words, "Stop crying and I'll take you up," always becoming quiet after they were uttered by a person standing beside her crib.

This child was almost continually under the eyes of her parents; yet one day, when she was taken out at the age of seven months by an apparently discreet and careful servant, she returned in a state

of high excitement, for which the attendant could or would give no explanation. For three days she was nervous to the border of hysteria. Then a neighbor called upon the mother and related that the baby had been thrown from her carriage, fortunately onto a snow pile, but the servant had kept her out until all signs of her fright should have died away, concealing the slight wound on the baby's forehead by pulling her hair over it. Only the tenderest care restored the child to her normal state of calm, and it took ten days for this. Under ordinary circumstances the shock would probably have brought on brain fever in a baby of such delicate organization.

It may seem impossible that an entire life can be so easily marred, that one evil shadow can cast a black and lasting curse; but there are natures so sensitive that no ordinary care will suffice for their protection during the most impressionable period. This is why the study of psychology is helpful to mothers. By learning the signs of fear in a young child, and knowing how to distinguish true fear from wilfulness, they will be able to exert a soothing and protecting influence at the right moment, and avert danger whose consequences are serious almost beyond belief in the case of our highly organized, excitable modern children.

Instead of recognizing the duty of protection,

which implies shielding the infant from every harmful influence, a mother not seldom uses terror as a means of subduing a refractory spirit. But it is quite possible to train a child to obedience without playing upon his timidity, and when we reflect that most of the misconduct that takes place in the world is either directly or indirectly the result of moral cowardice, it will seem worth while to guard, as if it were a precious treasure, a child's serenity of mind. A sturdy, straightforward, robust mental outlook—how delightful it is! I recollect an exhibition of it in a little girl who once came to our house on a visit. She was a healthy, rosy-cheeked child, with clear, light blue eyes, whose confident gaze seemed able to penetrate to the root of any matter that people might try to make a mystery of. Somebody, with an occult liking for sensations, brought forth for her entertainment a book full of weird pictures, anticipating a shriek when a certain hideous portrait of a skeleton was reached. But little Minnie looked at the thing with that frank curiosity which shows the entire absence of misgivings, and remarked, with a slight accent of disdain:

“I know what that is; that's old skin-bones!”

A few years later this young girl, then grown to strong, fearless maidenhood, captured a negro burglar hiding under her bed, and held him, with



the aid of a younger but equally courageous sister, until their screams had brought assistance and the man was given in charge of the police.

Possibly this is the conduct of natures inherently devoid of fear, and not to be expected where the physical and mental calibre is of a more delicate sort. Yet I have known instances of daring in little creatures of the most sensitive temperament, imaginative and easily startled from their self-possession, but with nerves of steel when their heroism was actually put to the test. A truly brave heart will overcome its natural tremors in times of real danger, and put down resolutely all recollections that render the present more formidable. But what an effort this requires only those who have exerted all their will-power to overcome the demoralizing effect of some nervous shock can realize. Life makes demands upon us for continual acts of fortitude, and what the fearless nature does easily and unconsciously, the child or grown person whose past contains a haunting experience, must do with pain and difficulty.

Happily, the telling of ghost-stories is no longer a regular nursery entertainment. In the days of Addison this practice was so common that he was led to express his views about it in the *Spectator*. "Were I a father," he said, "I should take particular care to preserve my children from those lit-

tle horrors of the imagination which they are apt to contract when they are young, and are not able to shake off when they are in years. . . . I look upon a sound imagination as the greatest blessing of life, next to a clear judgment and a good conscience."

But it is the mother, rather than the father, who is called upon to secure this blessing to her children. She ought to begin away back in the beginning—with the very first surroundings of the newborn infant. Let it find its early life peaceful, quiet, and unhurried. And when infancy merges into that older period when young faculties are springing forward in rapid development, and each day the little one takes on more of the hue of its larger fellow creatures, let her be doubly careful that no untimely scare stunts its intelligence.

It is said that to be afraid of shadows is an inevitable passing experience of childhood. Yet I know one small toddler who never has shown any such disposition, but whose great delight is to play with her own shadow and other shadows, when the lights are brought in each night. She is a peculiarly sensitive, sympathetic little thing, and could easily be made timid by unwise treatment. But under the sheltering care of fond and judicious parents, she is remarkable for "not knowing what it is to be afraid"; and although she is given to unpleasant dreams, as many young children are,

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and often awakens with a start, a low word or touch soothes her into serenity, and she passes her days singing and dancing from the pure joy of life.

Happy above others is the little child who thinks of his mother as a veritable refuge from trouble, a bulwark against danger, and a sympathizing presence at all times. It is asking a great deal of a woman to exact such faithful care. Mothers are neither omniscient nor tireless, and must often call in assistance to relieve their watch. But let such substitutes be tried and trusted friends. The atmosphere of peace we labor to create must never be disturbed by a suspicion of storm if our children are to grow in it to that excellent attitude of courage which is the basis of truth, of generosity, and of self-control.

There is a certain law in intellectual training which is recollected seldom. It is this: children ought to be informed about matters when they want to know, and not when we think it proper to teach them. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred they are snubbed for asking questions, and the hundredth time they are rebuked for not taking more interest in what we wish them to learn. He is a wise teacher who understands that the proper moment for imparting knowledge is when a child is moved to ask for it. Says Tennyson: "In children a great curiousness is well, who have themselves to learn, and all the world."

## Curiosity

IF all the wonders of this world should break suddenly and without preparation upon a full-grown man, his mind would faint under it. The commonest things, apparently without cause, would seem miraculous. Knowing no laws of nature he would attempt outrageous feats, and exhaust all his energies to satisfy his curiosity. Happily we grow into knowledge gradually, so that this cannot happen.

Yet something a little like it happens every day in a child's life. He opens his eyes at dawn and watches the streak of sunlight steal through the window and strike athwart the ceiling, and questions crowd themselves upon his mind. What keeps the line so narrow? why doesn't it break and scatter all over the room? Why is it on that side of the house in the morning and on the other side in the evening? He assails the first person he meets with these queries and with twenty others succeeding. His little brain is alert and eager. There are so many queer things. He wants very much to know why his goblet of water "sweats," and why people have to wear clothes; what use

flies are (a puzzler !), and why babies can't walk just as well as grown people.

Thoughts rush through his mind in a disorderly procession; everything starts him off on a new track. His confusion is pitiable. He is like a person suddenly introduced into a show where a dozen bands are playing different tunes. He wants to hear, see, and know *everything*. And half the time somebody responds to his complaints with a remonstrating, "Don't be silly." It is as if they said: "Don't be natural, don't be a child."

We take pleasure in showing the beauties of our home to strangers and in listening to their admiring exclamations. And if it grows monotonous we recollect the duties of hospitality. But a child's situation is analogous to that of a guest. We hold the stores of knowledge and are familiar with the mysteries; he clamors to be let in and shown about. He seems *unreasonable*, and the other affairs of life are urgent.

How hard—how almost impossible it is for a grown person to recall his own youthful feelings at the moment he is dealing with a child ! And how different would be many incidents of their lives if our memories could bring up stronger impressions of the sufferings we have outlived.

Does not Nature know what she is doing when she makes imagination riotous in children ? The

little things scrambling up on our knees with their eyes and ears wide open and their restless tongues chattering have been projected into a strange world—a world of facts, and they want to understand their reason for being.

Children see everything and comprehend comparatively nothing, so their query nearly always is—not, “What is it?” but “Why is it?” Their instinct falters about in the darkness for a governing principle, a law, and nothing else can satisfy. And herein is a wide difference in the perceptions of children. Some are born utilitarians, while others are born lovers of beauty and pleasure. A pair of bright eyes will turn indifferently away from a beautiful object to ask succinctly, “What is it *for*?” while another child will be charmed with the sight of exquisite forms and colors, betraying a purely sensuous gratification. Thus early in life is drawn the sharp line between the scientific and artistic qualities.

A mother who sees each day some odd manifestation, ponders silently over these things and learns to perceive the extreme diversity of her children’s natures, although often it remains incomprehensible. It is the problem of her life to divide her attention justly between conflicting claimants: to satisfy the sober, anxious demands of the eldest-born whose brow is puckered with thought, and to

quiet without grieving the youngest chatterbox who would like to hang upon her skirts all day reiterating the same notes of interrogation.

She asks herself sometimes if a mother really is expected to be an encyclopedia, and is inclined to say petulantly, "Go to your father," or "Go to your teacher." But this is a delicate point in management. To the child his mother is all-wise, and she ought to be cautious of shaking that sweet confidence. It is not to be expected that children will be reasonable in the demands upon their friends' time and strength. What do they know about such matters until they are taught? The discriminating mother will recognize when a crisis is at hand, when a mental revolution is taking place in her child, and his whole nature is wrought up to a pitch of earnestness, and when he is merely trifling. It is necessary—of all things—that children should never be confused or confounded. They can appreciate a frank confession of ignorance when, as often happens, their questions are too deep for their hearers. But a parent ought not to say "I don't know!" merely because he is lazy and indisposed to think.

Miss Muloch has a pretty little anecdote in one of her stories which sounds natural. Little "King Arthur's" mother was obliged to plead ignorance as to the working of locomotives, and to her excuse



he responded gravely: "But, mamma, you ought to know!" And this little reproof sent his loving mother to books to repair her omission. Happy the child whose mother is so faithful. The moments we spend in acquiring knowledge to impart to our children are well employed, for a child should be taught chiefly by conversation and seldom directly from books.

The plea most mothers will make to this—that they have not time—should be translated into one that, in many instances, would be more candid: they have not inclination. The author recalls a little experience which took place years ago when she was pursuing a course of elocution in college. A young man who belonged to the class excused himself from rehearsal on the plea of "no time," when she had the impulse to turn to him and say: "You mean you don't want to. People always find time for whatever they really *want* to do." A few days afterward the gentleman, who was a busy law student, came to her and said frankly, "Do you know what you said haunted me? I've been thinking about it, and I believe it is true. Half the time our excuses of 'lack of time' are petty evasions. We can do what we take a hearty interest in."

Who doubts that the utmost pains is none too much to bestow upon the development of a young

mind ? A mother should feel that her vocation is supreme. Civilized society is hard upon women in some ways. Women are hard upon themselves. They want to be perfect in household duties and in social duties, and to be mothers also. But to be a worthy mother, completely faithful to her duties, is a life-work for any woman. Let her do what she can besides; that comes first. Success in every other way cannot compensate for the loss of influence with our children. Mothers sometimes feel this bitterly when it is too late. She who leads a little child toward light and knowledge gains an unbounded influence over him. The history of all great men usually begins with a loving, earnest mother. The boy's eager questions are often keys he presents to unlock the mysteries of his nature.

Persons of large, portly presence make a remarkable impression sometimes upon the youthful mind. The author recalls two incidents in point. One, of a tiny maid of half a dozen years, who, sitting demurely beside her father in a public conveyance, watched with round-eyed amazement an immensely fat man take his place opposite, then whispered to her father in that penetrating "stage whisper" always audible to company, "Oh, papa, is that the man that ate the church and ate the steeple and ate the tower and all the people?"

The other was something similar, but this was a little boy of three who, aboard an electric car for the first time, was impatient to be off. Being told that they could not start until a load was made up he sat quietly for a moment or two, until a fleshy woman, elegantly dressed in flowing draperies which had the effect of greatly increasing her apparent bulk, sailed in and settled herself upon the middle of the opposite seat. The tot gazed at her solemnly for a second, then, raising his voice, called to the conductor, "The car's full now ; you can go on !"

## Nursery Note-books

NOTWITHSTANDING the great amount of talk that has been going on of late about "the child"—as if he were a rare specimen of some newly discovered species!—very few mothers are in the habit of performing the simple and reasonable duty of keeping a nursery note-book. If one has had a scientific training, and is inclined to be extremely methodical and painstaking, a daily record may be made of the advance the little one makes in the development of perceptive faculties, in the acquisition of language, and the taking on of those habits which bring him nearer to our own standard of what an intelligent being gets to be through imitation of the models put before him. Such a series of observations, carried into the most minute and trivial details, would be a more satisfactory performance in the opinion of the "pedagogical school" than the natural and unstudied method of journal-writing that comes easy to the average mother. But it is questionable if it would be more valuable, except in the way of supplying data to the psychologists who are giving their energies to solving the problem of the mind of the child.

. They find it desirable to enlist the aid of mothers in making observations, and one of them has flatteringly declared that the best method scientists can make use of is less sure than the "sympathetic insight" of a mother; but another utters the *naïve* complaint that it is difficult to induce a mother to make scientific experiments, as it means depriving the child temporarily of the advantages of education; that is, converting him into a passive instrument.

We may then let these vivisectionists of child-nature carry on their brave experiments with their own children and such stray ones as they can capture. Science has its own great fields; all fields are in a way its own, but it is not conspicuously present everywhere, nor indispensable to some of the sweet and natural usages of life.

The experimenting of mothers is not of the formal order; it is usually unconscious, always subordinate to the greater end of child-training, and does not deliberately go out of its way in the interest of the public welfare. I recollect a pretty story told by Holm Lee, of a child born to a wise man, who was inclined to look upon the young creature as a curiosity, and invited his friends, all wise men, to hold a council over him and determine what qualities he possessed and what his future career was likely to be. They put the baby

in their great tobacco-box, and smoked over him and talked about him for quite a while, till Lupine, his mother, and his old nurse grew uneasy, and, breaking in upon the council, seized the baby and ran away with him. What mother wouldn't ?

There is a vast deal of nonsense about the investigations professed "child-culturists" are making, and their note-books contain some stuff so puerile and inane that it is surprising that the men and women of really superior minds, who belong to the pedagogical school, should go on devoting themselves to an occupation so little creditable to their common sense. When all the trash is sifted out there will doubtless remain much that will be valuable to students of human nature.

It is chiefly for her own instruction and guidance that a mother needs to keep some kind of nursery note-book. For the refreshment of her memory, when patience is likely to fail, and for the reawakening of dulled sympathy with childish moods, as well as for the enlightenment of others to whom she may choose to impart her experiences, the results of her labor will more than repay her for the trouble taken. She need follow no rules, nor even attempt to make regular entries, unless she has inclination for the task. Facts bearing upon physical variations are extremely valuable, and it is wise to note the weight and growth of a child at regular

intervals, to ascertain whether he is developing normally. Even more important are observations upon his general health, temperament, disposition, and the use he makes of his faculties. Although the mother herself may not be aware of the standard he should attain, her statement of facts may give the clue to a physician when puzzling symptoms show themselves. Often deafness and defects of vision might be prevented if the early signs of their coming on had been heeded. A single incident might have sufficed to set a skilled practitioner upon the right track, if the mother had written down at the time an account of the peculiarity that attracted her attention, which afterwards is not recalled.

A note-book of this sort, begun as soon as possible after a child is born, will be a profitable employment for any mother's leisure moments. Some conscientious young mothers have their physician or nurse write down the most important facts bearing upon their child's physical life, from the hour of its birth, and take up the narrative themselves as soon as they can.

It is pleasant to know just when our baby became conscious of sound ; when sensitiveness to light manifested itself, and to watch the gradual awakening of the sleeping senses of a young human being who enters life so inert and helpless. Women

who have but slight knowledge of the science of life may yet learn in a short time enough to make the growth of a little child as interesting as a drama. The "divine comedy" begins anew with the birth of every child, and it is the great privilege of motherhood to be admitted into close communion with the infant star performer, so that his slightest movements may reveal to her loving watchfulness something not suspected by indifferent observers.

If the early days of an infant's life are full of interest, how much more fascinating the pretty play becomes as the baby develops individuality and begins that lisping language which is his first attack upon the barrier that divides him from the grown-up world! Before the dawn of any history the mother-heart was the page where love wrote with "his wings of light"; nor has he ceased to flutter golden drops upon the same fair sheet. But the fondest mother lets treasures of memory slip away from her, and she should try to keep secure records of matters she will some day think of great account.

The narrative of a child's sayings and doings, written down from the partial standpoint of affection, are a romance of history, instinct with the life and spirit that make the character-drawing of the poet and novelist so much more vivid and signifi-



cant than the dry outlines of the historian. A single incident in a person's life may give the keynote of his character, and the unconscious disclosures the young child makes of his heart and mind are often the strongest likenesses that can be taken of him at different periods. No mother should neglect to write down the more striking events that take place in the nursery. If every mother took the trouble, there would grow up a rich literature of childhood, and—let us say to those who are lamenting the present puerility of American literature—nobody would have to read this lore of young human nature unless he was interested in it.

Of mere text-books of child-study there are now a great number, many dreadfully abstruse, a few instructive and concise. Those who wish to learn the salient facts about a baby's normal development cannot select a better guide than the little book of Preyer's entitled "Infant Mind." It says much in little space, and gives all needed information without going into tiresome detail. Really sympathetic studies of child-nature are much more rare, but among them Sully's "Studies of Childhood" ranks high. It is a book to hide in the family mending-basket and dip into now and then as one finds time. We need to have our respect for the distinct personality of little people quick-

ened now and then, for the habit of swallowing up their small lives in our own is a pernicious legacy from stern old times that we have not yet laid aside. "Child-study" has become a fad, and as objects of investigation little ones are treated with a flattering deference that threatens to pass into subserviency; but we fail still in the true respect that recognizes the pure moral quality of innocent, unspoiled human nature.

Keeping a nursery note-book is one of the best ways of reminding ourselves that children are not a different species, nor an inferior species, but only ungrown men and women, with faults and virtues like our own; subject to moods, full of eccentricities, and in need—as we ourselves—of a judge like the one craved by the Irishman: one that will not be overstrict, but will "lean a little."

~~we~~ acquire, while we are children, not only the use of words but a choice of expressions, and these expressions cling to us. Certain terms of speech are often the occasion of annoyance to men and women who find it almost impossible to break themselves of bad habits fixed in their early years. Children should not be allowed to use slang. It is the great foe to good breeding. He whose speech is slovenly will be loose in more important particulars, while the person who has accustomed himself to pause and arrange what he has to say that it may be fittingly uttered, will be careful in other points of breeding. Children take kindly to correction of their mode of speaking, for in that, more than almost anything else, they know themselves fallible, and a vulgar or ungrammatical expression should not go unchecked. This is one of the matters that will be governed almost entirely by home training. No technical knowledge of grammar will save a child whose surroundings are rough and low, from a rough and vulgar way of talking.

## Dialect in the Nursery

THE question whether "dialect" stories are to continue popular has a particular importance for children. Juvenile periodical literature is as much under the sway of a fashion that, when allowed to run to excess, must be considered pernicious, as are the larger magazines. Most of the otherwise admirable periodicals for young people teem with slang, provincialisms, and awkward phrases.

Low life is so graphically depicted, the news-boy, the bootblack, and the canal-boat girl are drawn so much to the life, with all their imperfections of speech in their mouths, that it is to be doubted whether the child can rise from the perusal of these stories without being more or less saturated with the dialect. The effect is the same, in its influence upon his own language, as if he had spent the hour in the company of street-gamins, receiving through the medium of his ears, instead of his eyes, an acquaintance with slang.

Mature minds may descend into these slums without smirching the purity of their speech, although this is doubtful. The *Writer* magazine recently related an amusing incident of a well-bred

woman who shocked her family at the breakfast table by lapsing into some remarkable idioms, and who gave as her excuse that she had spent the previous evening reading dialect stories, and had fallen under their influence. If the habits and training of years can be so revolutionized, how much more readily will children, whose tastes are in the transition-stage, be bewitched by the forceful phrases whose peculiarly engaging quality is that they are almost wholly emotional, and express the simplest ideas and feelings with ease !

But few parents care to have their little sons and daughters import their every-day conversation from the pages of dialect literature. There is, indeed, some surprise shown as to where certain obnoxious expressions can have been learned, and ungrammatical phrases are sharply reproved, while slang is deplored as an effect of bad associations.

Truly so. But the bad associations may not have been living comrades. Any one who will critically examine current juvenile literature will find that within the past ten years there has been a falling off in literary style among popular writers for the young. That great breeze which a woman of genius stirred up in the Tennessee mountains has inspired many lesser authors, desirous of being noted for breeziness and vigor, in efforts of emulation which too often are lamentable failures.

And when the rural district was well worked, the slums began to be explored; and now we have hosts of grimy, unlettered little heroes and heroines stalking at large through the pages of literature, attracting the admiring attention of our children, whom we carefully send to school to learn to speak and write English.

There is a little inconsistency here. How can we expect any child to be totally uninfluenced by what he reads? And is it not one of the great functions of literature to cultivate a reader's taste and elevate his habits of speaking and thinking? There should be amongst wise parents a strong sentiment against dialect literature for children. An occasional idiom may be suffered, but the tendency which is showing itself nowadays to reproduce in all speeches the peculiarities of the speakers cannot but counteract in great measure the benefits gained from occasional good reading. For young people like periodicals as well as their parents like them. They look forward to their illustrated weekly or monthly with as much eagerness as older persons show for the possession of their pet magazines and papers; and, since reading makes so large a part of their enjoyment, it is an essential matter to furnish them with reading which will exert a good influence in every way.

It is admitted, by those whose particular busi-

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ness it is to cater to youthful tastes, that nothing is more difficult than to write good stories for children. But while the dear old classics of Hawthorne and Kingsley and Lamb remain to us we need not give them trash. And dialect has become only a "fad." It is surely not necessary, in order to be entertaining, to be crude, startling, or vulgar. If children like their little dishes hot and well spiced, it is the fault of writers who aim to supply what is racy rather than what is pure and delicate, and who endeavor to make up for a lack of imagination by grotesque combinations.

I know from experience that there is in the heart of every child a craving for "the true, the good, and the beautiful," overlaid, as it may be, by acquired roughness, and that even the little child who comes out from the meanest and most sordid surroundings will respond quickly to the touch of fancy's wand, and yield entranced attention to legends and romances skilfully adapted to his understanding.

We need not, then, quite yet, fall back upon the vulgar and sensational as nursery literature.

In an old, old story which is obsolete in this generation there was an anecdote of a little baby princess who was lost in a park and fell in with a tiny peasant maid with whom she made friends in sweet, childish fashion, and was found by her distracted governess sitting with her arms around her new acquaintance, pouring confidential disclosures into the plebeian ears. There is in the child heart a natural impulse toward universal friendliness, which is, however, too soon destroyed under the false distinctions we teach children to draw.



## The Spirit of Christmas

ENGLISH literature possesses but one great Christmas story, Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." It stands above all others as Christmas day itself towers majestically over all the other days in the year. Certain elderly gentlemen, who are not reconciled to our twentieth-century materialism, tell me that they retire to their own rooms on each twenty-fifth of December and read the inimitable "Carol" over again. From such enthusiasts one would expect a remarkable exhibition of the true Christmas spirit, an almost reckless abandonment of self and pocketbook to the demands of the occasion. Yet I have observed in them rather less zeal in giving than criticism of the present fashion of holiday-keeping, and the suggestion will thrust itself forward that *any* shelter which self throws up against good fellowship with the best the present offers is a flimsy disguise of inward niggardliness, not less pitiable nor less in need of reform than Scrooge himself.

Because we cannot have the Yule log and traditional roast pig, shall we refuse the cheer of anthracite coal and baked turkey? Or if even the open

fire, the mistletoe, and the family gathering are beyond us, must we disdain the home-making attempts of the steam-radiator, and find no comfort in the dainty elaborateness of a well-spread table catering to the needs of refined modern taste? Suppose the misanthrope (for the recluse who lives only in an imaginary Christmas is a misanthrope) came out of his shell and gathered the young people about him to charm their ears with tales of the old ways of holiday-keeping "when he was a boy." Would not this be better than grumbling out protests against the new ways that have their own reasons for being, and offer in turn their own measure of enjoyment to willing spirits? Genial old age is always a welcome presence, and it never suggests any contrasts that put us out of conceit with the pleasures that lie within our reach. But carping, even if it proceeds from the patriarch, is an infliction severe enough to blight any holiday.

In the nature of things there must be holidays. How poverty-stricken is that soul which does not recognize this necessity and throw itself heartily into the work of helping forward the good time youth and all unspoiled minds accept with gratitude! There is no predeterminate set of conditions for holiday-making that need tie adventurous hands, and if traditional customs belonging to Thanksgiving and Christmas are vanished beyond

recall, we can harmonize the day with our present abilities.

My sympathy is with those who wish to bring back upon Christmas day the sweet old traditional observances. I love them well, even those that are known to me only by hearsay and were outgrown in that shadowy period alluded to as "before the war." But no one thing is indispensable to happiness with any of us, unless with children, and not even with them if judicious substitute is made. Whatever we have, or whatever we lack, the quality that makes the occasion is the spirit we bring to it. Good will never fails to create a good time. It finds merit in rain, lifts fog, and lights a cheery blaze within that passes for the sunshine in its absence. And good will has not passed away with chivalry, nor perished under the onrush of science. It lives and breathes now, and is here at this moment to light our Christmas fires and swing incense before our altars. All we need do is to recognize and adapt it, even as old Scrooge did when he flung up his window to inhale the crisp, sparkling air, and embrace all humanity in his overflowing thankfulness that the time was still his own to redeem his useless past.

I hope none of us has such a past to redeem. Very few people have not at some time in their lives labored to brighten the lives of the poor or

bring joy to children. No dearer privilege is ours than this. Children are easily made happy if one understands them. Not what we give them so much as what we do for them insures their gratification. They want our sympathy, our companionship, our hearty co-operation in what interests and engrosses them. Perhaps this is one feature of the Santa Claus myth that endears it to these young monopolists. The idea of a beneficent saint who is all their own, literally devoted to their interest, is entrancing.

The tendency of our day is to pull down this idol and let in a prosaic, every-day light upon the rosy glamour of fairyland. But at what a cost is this initiation into practical truths accomplished ! Childhood is, *par excellence*, the age of faith and love, and these two combined create a region of beauty where miracles of heroism and generosity are accepted as natural happenings. All too soon must our little ones learn the caution and calculation that teach us to expect just so much as we confer, and make of life a sad affair of barter and exchange. Do we not hear ten-year-old Alice recite her obligations to her schoolmates for so many bonbons and illuminated cards, and lament with candid avarice that she has been overreached in her transfer of presents ? And our wise eldest-born, listener to too many councils as to the family

exchequer, betrays a selfish determination to exact his due to the utmost, that is much less manageable and altogether more ignoble than the most extravagant demands of credulous youngsters upon the exhaustless bank of Santa Claus.

But modern children are wise so early that they scarcely carry out of their cradles the credulity that once kept them serenely unobservant of the clumsy aids we offered to their pretty fancies. Most of the elaborate embroidery about the bare fact that there once lived a benevolent Saint Nicholas who gave good gifts to children has been wrought from the imagination of the children themselves. Give an ingenious child a single idea as a basis and he imagines a whole epic. But, on the other hand, destroy that foundation, and all he has dreamed, constructed, and cherished falls to pieces, carrying something with it that it is a pity to deprive him of, indeed; that calm acceptance of the marvellous which grows later on into lofty self-abnegation and the courage that knows "no such word as 'fail.'" Yes, from the ranks of imaginative children, credulous to a fault of all the myths of fairy lore, is recruited the army of workers in the higher realms of the world. Faith is the germ from which genius grows. We may well strive to preserve in them at least the tendency to "believe all things, hope all things," and if Santa Claus ceases, by the time

they can pronounce his name, to be a veritable personage, and fairyland has become something more shadowy than the golden castles reared in the clouds every sunset, it is to be hoped that enough of the power to create illusions still survives to glorify plain matters of fact that have scarcely of themselves a welcome aspect.

Little cynics are abhorrent to all lovers of child nature; infant skeptics pitiable in their incapacity to exult over pretty fables and innocent illusions. Tell children the truth, if we must tell them everything in its naked simplicity, but do not let us *force* them out of childhood's natural realm, full of verisimilitudes flashing in rainbow hues into our logical but calculating atmosphere. The delight of youth is innocent, transparent exaggeration. Holiday-time presupposes leaving off customary pursuits and the abandoning one's self to impulses that need not be greatly distrusted if they spring from good hearts.

Herein persons whose daily lives are not too rich in pleasures have an advantage over satiated favorites of fortune. They can enjoy because they can appreciate the contrast between working days and holidays. And if we would give zest to our children's merry-making, let them embrace some enjoyments that are rarely experienced. A little excess is craved at times by all of Adam's frail

children. No prudent elder will encourage the total abandonment of the checks that control appetite, and yet the Christmas feast is an inevitable accompaniment of the splendid day; and just as matron and master prepare themselves to groan a little internally, when the holiday is past, for their self-indulgence, the smaller ones must have their hour of forgetfulness and their subsequent resolves of future moderation; for this is part of life's training. And slowly would our training proceed if we did not have occasion to bring ourselves up smartly at times for our over-relaxations.

Gift-making is one of the most gracious features of Christmas, and one that I pray may survive all other outgrown customs. When love and sympathy are close counsellors there is little fear that we shall make the mistake of leaving out of our little one's stocking the particular thing he has set his heart upon getting. And if his choice is beyond us to gratify, let us come as near to it as we can, and not convert this season into a sort of convenience for ourselves, thrusting upon his reluctant acceptance such prosaic articles as shoes, hats, and other essentials of the toilet. Far prettier is the German custom of bestowing gaudy trifles that have no use in themselves, but are part of the glitter and fashion of the holiday. When it is possible, nothing is so good to have as the traditional



Christmas tree. In after-years memory hangs about it fondly, and we bless in our hearts the kind hands that took so much trouble to give us pleasure.

Then the stocking hung up on Christmas eve has a romance all its own. The breakfast-table dressed with holly-berries and gifts piled under snowy napkins is a graceful custom, and is far nicer than the blunt handing out of our gifts. Some trouble should be taken to create the welcome element of surprise. We all like it, but it is one of the greatest delights in a child's experience. He finds out before we would choose to have him that what is looked forward to most eagerly seldom turns out well. It is sad philosophy, yet true, that it is dangerous to set one's heart on anything in this world. But the love that hides its intention until the hour of fulfilment, and then lets out its secret in an outburst of generosity, is the best substitute that is ever offered for the special Providence—Santa Claus, and all other gracious myths.

An example of generosity is seldom lost upon children if its true, not artificial. They are very willing to live up to their little knowledge, if we allow them the chance, and part of our duty to the day is to encourage in our young people the same kindness we cultivate in ourselves. It is so much easier to learn in youth to be genial, sympathetic,



and generous than it is after embittering experiences have hardened our hearts. Fresh, unspoiled natures readily take to themselves the lesson of the Christmas Carol, and to children Bob Cratchit's holiday is a perfect picture, lacking in no element that is essential to a good time. Heaven pity the sophisticated ones that find it too simple and primitive for their taste! Yet if our means are ample, let us not be frugal in our preparations at this season of lavish, free-handed giving. Dickens' Christmas spirit of to-day was no niggard, and looking upon him we must forget to reckon what we needs must do, and instead, do all we can.

Ah! that jolly Christmas ghost, with the holly wreath upon his broad brow, the mirth in his kind eyes, and the mountain of good cheer under his feet, to which of us has he not often appeared in fancy, fitly representing the bounty and generosity of the ideal Christmas-tide? And not one among us but can learn anew from this inward revelation our duty to the day. "Let the dead past bury its dead;" we are concerned with what belongs to us now. The spirit of Christmas present enjoins upon us what every foregoing spirit would entreat, were they all in line chanting the carol that is everlasting, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

Kittens and puppies that are members of large families, and have brothers and sisters to frolic with, learn to play without scratching and biting. And the same remark applies to children. To have a large family is not always a matter of rejoicing with parents, but when a child has several brothers and sisters he is from the first in the natural position of being a member of a little community, and learns to adjust his wishes and plans to the wishes and plans of others, and to be accommodating and conciliating. It is as hard for an only child to be unselfish as it is for the proverbial rich man to go to heaven. Where a child is the only one he ought to be as much as possible in the company of other children that he may get the benefit of their frank criticism upon his manners and habits. The judgment of one's peers is essential to self-knowledge.

## The Washington Pickaninny

HE lives on the street. Not on those beautiful asphalt roads which are the great mark of the progress made by the past ten years in the city, but on those by-streets, as yet untouched by the corporation, where mud abounds, ashes lie about in heaps, and tumble-down shanties, rented to pay taxes on improving ground, stand as an eyesore to lovers of neatness and order.

Out from these crowded huts pours every morning a tribe of frisking youngsters, dirty, half clothed, probably hungry, yet bright and saucy-looking, with the "peartness" that is the distinguishing feature of the Americanized negro child, early thrown out to make shift for himself, and gain by his wits that living the world owes him. Whether he is born with it, or whether it is told to him as his first lesson, certain it is that the toddler of two or three seems to feel, as he struts about on his bowed legs (nearly all pickaninnies are bow-legged), that white folks are his natural patrons and supporters. He looks with admiration upon the school children and accosts them familiarly and confidently, taking rebuff and encouragement with the serenity of a

person who feels quite secure of his own position, and sure to get finally what belongs to him.

All this shines out in his beady black eyes and frankly spread mouth as he sits on the curb, challenging the white boys to play marbles, with the "shooters" fished out of the ash-barrel, or "grabbed" from some unwary little property holder. The darky has the *far niente* of the Italian "gamin," without the latter's melancholy. If he is ever serious it is because he is sullen, brooding over some injury to his dignity. Generally he is cheerful to the point of geniality. Although not much given to laughing, he is prone to mirthfulness, and looks at things from the humorous point of view. He is the most companionable of creatures to pass an idle hour with, and it is no wonder that white children, when allowed to exercise their taste, gravitate quite naturally to his society.

The little darkies, whose parents have belonged to the old dispensation and still retain their attachment to old ways, are the true "pickaninnies." They are a mixture of bashfulness and assurance, and no sense of awe can keep their impudence in check.

Thoroughly imbued with the principles of "liberty, equality, and fraternity," it never enters their heads that ragged clothes and grimy faces are any bar to good society, and they press them-

selves quite as readily upon the notice of the young aristocrat who issues forth in velvet knickerbockers astride a bicycle, as they would hobnob with the Irish newsboy. With even greater relish, for the darky has no love for the "poor white," and feels more at home in superior circles.

A Northerner can scarcely understand the freemasonry that exists South between the white children and these "pickaninnies." His taste is shocked, and liberal opinions to the contrary, he shrinks from actual contact with the "blacks." But Southern children have equally in their blood the instinct of fellowship with them. They patronize and domineer over the inferior race at the same time that they permit themselves to be used, as the cunning little darkies do not hesitate to use their more prosperous friends. It is no unusual sight to see a tatterdemalion careering up and down the street on a borrowed bicycle or toy cart, while the youthful owner stands meekly waiting for a chance to use his own property again, or to see a talkative, ingenious little darky girl sitting on the back stoop of some house where her mother is employed, monopolizing for the nonce the dolls and tea-sets of her obliging baby hostess, and glibly giving her opinion as to how things should be done.

She is always ready for any situation. Upon no

inducement could she be made to confess her ignorance of "proper ways," and she has no hesitation in giving lessons to her companions in "manners." "Seems like you d'know how ter act, no way," will exclaim with dignity some little ace-of-spades, drawing herself up; but the *hauteur* is only momentary. There is so much rollicking humor about these children of the street that it breaks out in bursts of mimicry and droll speeches, so that their anger seems like the harmless wrath of monkeys. Yet they can be vindictive. There is a dark streak in the grain of the African nature which shows in occasional ferocity that appalls the observer. Emotional creatures always have it in them to be cruel, and the darky—the uneducated darky, the old-fashioned stock *bur et simple*—is wholly emotional.

Superstition is rampant. The small children have a sign for everything, and will avoid anything quickly, if told that it is "bad luck." This makes it possible to impose upon them and beguile them into obeying when they are inclined to rebel against orders. Under orders they usually are. It is the destiny of the ignorant to serve, and the "pickaninny" unconsciously fulfils his mission. Sometimes he is dumbly subservient, and sometimes loud in self-assertion, and yet, somehow, in the tossing to and fro of the social balls, his is sure

ultimately to lodge underneath. This may be because there is an awful supremacy which he realizes about mind. He has a certain jealous respect for learning, and particularly at present when the majority of colored children attend school, and show the result of this advantage in the proud display they make of their school-books and the fragments of learning. The injured "pickaninny" who must mind the babies at home, or is debarred from his schooling otherwise, has a sense of inferiority that makes him the easy prey of persons of superior understanding.

Colored parents are rather harsh to their children. They beat them into submission while they are babies, and naturally the young ones become liars and cowards. A truthful, courageous colored child is the exception among the class we are dealing with. Of course, the educated colored family is entirely different. The "pickaninny" is a selfish little animal from the start. Otherwise he could not survive. All the conditions are against him: In the shanty smoke, scolding, scraps of food at irregular intervals, a bed shared with three or four others, perhaps; cold, dreariness, and discomfort to the creature who has as innate a love of luxury as a cat; out of doors nothing of earthly good except what he can beg or steal. It is too much to ask them to be moral. The old adage always

seemed to me erroneous: "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Should it not run, "Cleanliness must come before Godliness"? Surely this is common sense. But after all, wisdom must come before either. A person must know a great deal before he can conceive cleanliness. *A propos* is an anecdote of a colored mother who was rather a superior person in her class. She had taught school once, and was now the sedate wife of a cartman and a "householder." Her oldest hopeful, a bright boy of twelve, was "in service," and she was making a call upon his employer to talk matters over. The lady, a true Southerner in her readiness to haul her servants up for misdemeanors of any description, complained of the boy's dirtiness. "For goodness' sake, Fanny, why don't you make Will wash himself?"

Fanny had a way of drawling when she was serious, and leaning forward in her chair, she said now very impressively: "Mis' Carleton, I know a man what has a bathtub, and jest's soon's spring comes (it was then November) I'm agoin' ter borry it from him, and give every one of them children a bath!" But Fanny was an exceptionally devoted mother.

A characteristic of colored parents is that they will permit no one else to abuse their child. They are even more "touchy" upon this point



than white parents, because of the memory of that time when the "massa" possessed absolute authority over their offspring, and they were merely the rulers *pro tem* until such time as their own flesh and blood should be given over entirely to the legal owners. The simplest remark is often construed into a threat which they resent.

Civilization, however, will soon do away with the "pickaninny" in his outward semblance. The spirit of him will survive perhaps for generations, but it will not be recognized. The fair capital city is rapidly spreading its wings of progress over every suburb, and that portion of its poor that it cannot assimilate it will drive off. The "pickaninny" will be sent to school eventually; he will be washed, clothed, and taught grammar, and to disbelieve in the devil. He will cease his gambols in the gutter, and become a staid citizen with independent opinions in politics that cannot be bought, and his children will be more and more like white children, but they will not be so funny. Perhaps not so jolly. Certainly not so interesting as they are now.

Early in his career, if at all, the child must learn that knowledge, success, and wealth are not the only tangible and valuable things in life, but that deep down where the plummet of science never falls are springs of feeling and wells of truth, from which the soul that would grow wise and strong in its power to help others must continually hope to be refreshed.

## Faith

THERE are some robberies which the law is powerless to punish, and of which society takes no account. And yet it were easier to part with goods and chattels than to be deprived of one thing which people habitually and in wanton thoughtlessness take from little children. This is hope. To be hopeful and enthusiastic is to believe in one's power to do, and in the prospect of success; it is to be buoyed up above the plodding, every-day level into a region where inspirations float towards us; it is to be helped and quickened in a thousand ways during trials which otherwise would overcome us.

And yet this mental attitude so strong to resist hardships is of a poise so delicate that a breath of cynicism coming from one whose opinion we respect, the shock of cruel laughter, is sufficient to destroy it. Of hope the poet might sing, as of truth, that crushed to earth it shall rise again. But never to so lofty a height. Each ascent after a downfall is feebler than before. Finally it ceases to rise at all, and the soul settles down in that noisome valley of despond where only evil things live and

where health, beauty, and energy rapidly die away.

Whoever discourages a little one, whoever takes the heart out of his small enterprises and shadows his bright fancy with ill predictions begins in that young mind a process of destruction that may extend to all its energies. Carlyle, himself the queerest compound of hopefulness and despondency, casts one of his Jovian thunderbolts at the crawling foe whose venom had eaten into his own life. "For scepticism is not intellectual only; it is moral also; a chronic atrophy and disease of the whole soul. A man lives by believing something; not by debating and arguing about many things. A sad case for him when all that he can manage to believe is something he can button in his pocket. . . . Lower than that he will not get."

Faith, then, is life. It does not so much matter what thing we choose to do as that it should seem for us at the time the most important thing in all the world. Work done in this spirit is in some way effective, and will count, although it may be in itself trivial.

Children naturally work in this way, and play in this way at whatever they undertake of their own accord, and it is a grave mistake to interrupt and interfere with them, to belittle their self-elected tasks, and persuade them of the uselessness and folly of something that may look to us inane.

How do we know but that they are getting from these pastimes the very training that they most need? How can we divine the heat of enthusiasm, the serious purpose, the lofty faith that animate their persevering efforts! At the instant we see nothing but folly, the way is perhaps being prepared for some work the world will value; for long before any great act is performed the mind is disciplined and attuned to its purpose by exercises seemingly little related to it. The miniature feats enacted in the child-world are prophetic and preparatory for the life drama of the larger future.

Let us, then, leave to the child his enthusiasms. We have no right to utter in his presence those dreary axioms with which we quench many of our own truest impulses. "Enthusiasm," avows Bulwer, "is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it." What one of us, wearied and half beaten in the struggle for existence, would not eagerly live over again, if it were possible, one of those happy hours far back in youth, when all our faculties were alert and alive, when the present seemed desirable, the future roseate, and we ourselves godlike in capacity! An illusion, perhaps, but it is out of such illusions that spring inspirations of genius. One of our most brilliant essayists wrote an elaborate treatise once to prove that all the great work of the world had

been conceived and often begun in youth. And it is certain that unless the impulse is given then, it never will be.

The period comes when scarcely anything seems possible; the spirit of enterprise wanes. Lifting up a chair to carry from one room to another may seem harder than it would once have seemed to have invented a new language or to have built the Suez canal. But in such seasons of dulness let us refrain from spreading our personal disease.

Beware, above all, of bringing the cloud of doubt and discouragement into the child's innocent, fearless eyes. Encourage him to believe in the sanity of his own faculties, and he will then nurse into sturdy life energy that may accomplish something well worth the doing.

Several of the interesting books issued as "studies" in child psychology, reveal the fact that incidents repeat themselves in the lives of most imaginative persons. Certain stages of development are usually marked by certain experiences. Jean Ingelow, Margaret Deland, and Frances Hodgson Burnett all give us a view of the strangely subjective lives led by children under the semblance of healthy commonplace activities. They enact the most extraordinary dramas under our very eyes, and we know nothing about them. They build cities, rehearse the deeds of their favorite characters, invent new languages, and play all the fantastic tricks that an uncurbed fancy can suggest. In reading some of these autobiographical sketches we are often surprised to find that some incident that belonged to our own childhood, and that we fondly believed to be unique, was an experience shared by strangers.

## Infant Hoodooism

THE shadow of superstition falls darkly upon the child of the South. But in the merry fashion of children he sports with it and turns into play the weird fancies that at their first approach chill his blood with terror. The ancient "mammy," once a family institution, has vanished, but she has left her trace. She whispered secrets to her grandchildren, and it will be long before the public school eradicates that impression. And what her white nurslings heard at her knee they stored up unconsciously, to tell as legends to their own offspring, who were sure to have this fascinating lore reinforced by mysterious hints from the colored servants, who believed and trembled, even while they scouted the tales of "ole maum Liza" or "maum Nancy," as the case might be.

"Conjuring" is an art whose mention strikes terror to the hearts of the blacks, and awes the white children who are sufficiently under their influence not to care to contradict stories they do not entirely accept. These tales of "how de debil 'peared to uncle Ike one night in de da'ak woods," or how "lil' John was mos' sca't at out o' he wits by



de figer in white w'at laid a spell on him," obtain place in their memory with the folk-lore of India and Arabia which they gather from their fairy-books, and their alert imaginations construct of all this material queer little creeds which they hug in secret, and out of which spring some of the oddest pranks it could enter into the head of a child to play.

It is almost with a qualm of conscience that the author turns state's evidence and draws the veil of secrecy which shrouds these scenes from the profane gaze of the unsympathetic "grown-up," and she only does it upon the express understanding that if any occurrence narrated should be located by some suspicious parent, no penalty is to attach to any little culprit who shall be by these means found out! So, bespeaking pardon in advance, the acknowledgment may follow that the quiet back yards of many staid and respectable houses witness the enactment of scenes which would cause the hair to rise on the head of the dignified pater-familias, and make mamma avow that her innocent little children were surely bewitched. But for the most part, these exciting performances are the work of a single agent. Rarely does the child possessed of a determination to exercise the black art admit his dearest friend to his confidence. Partly from a dread of ridicule—the great bugbear of

childhood—and partly from the delight it affords him to feel that he is in secret league with some awe-inspiring power of the air or earth, he pursues his frightfully pleasant little occupation alone and where he is sure of being unwatched.

It is in the soft air of the southern Indian summer, or during the fervid heat of the “dog days,” that the romantic child, whose mind is full of myths, legends, and ghost-stories, feels inspired to try his hand as a conjurer. The impression is strong, as it once was with the men who persistently sought for the elixir of life, that there is some happy combination of circumstances, which, if he can catch it, will endow him with the coveted power. He apprehends that it is made up of words, gestures, and the right aspect of the sun, or perhaps even the condition of the bricks or stones in the walk, which to his fancy are full of latent life, only waiting to start forth at a mystic touch. Woe be it at this wonderful instant, to the nurse or visitor, or even relative, who shall offend the young creature in the mood to work a miracle ! If she could but know it, she is in imminent danger of being transformed into a donkey or even a dog, at the behest of the little one who, with a few drops of water in his hand, waits for her to turn her back so that he may besprinkle her to the accompaniment of some muttered words, the weirdest and

most unlike his mother tongue that his wits can devise !

Or it may be that leaning from an attic window and holding on to some quaint object, whose oddity might well entitle it to be the repository of occult power, the child goes through those "woven paces and waving arms" which the Arabian enchanter, as well as the fabled Merlin of whom he has probably not heard, made the prelude to some mighty incantation. Ever on the outlook for the spell-working thing which he needs, and is sure of ultimately finding, he eagerly seizes and hoards whatever has about it the slightest tinge of mystery. There was an old carpenter's level lying about in a certain house, that had strayed into the family from some unknown source, and it was appropriated by a little girl whose fanciful mind endowed the drop of mercury, that flowed from the end to the side of the stick as she inclined it, with the property of life. She convinced herself that it was a fairy imprisoned by an enchanter, and spent many an hour dallying with it and longing for the magic word which could set the captive free.

This magic word is a continually craved possession. The child feels that the common language of his country will not furnish it, and so an out-of-the-way phrase has a fascination for him, particularly a scrap of a foreign tongue. One little creature

set a high value upon "abracadabra" as an expletive, and only lost faith in it when repeated trials under varied surroundings proved its inefficiency to transform her foes into animals, or stones into diamonds. Colored waters prepared in certain ways are supposed to have peculiar properties, and real witches' broth is prepared upon occasion by stewing frogs' legs, brick-dust, and—excuse me, dainty reader—earthworms. A never-to-be-forgotten scene took place in the far end of a garden, where remote from help, a poor little child, despised by the other village children and dubbed "Ma'y Jane Crazy," was half cajoled, half compelled by a naughty boy to partake of this witches' broth, and in the momentary consternation which followed her swallowing it, the youthful enchanter tried to change her into a horned owl.

But of this added insult the injured one remained happily unconscious. It is to be remarked that the intended victims always are unconscious of the harm essayed. Great would be their consternation if they should wheel around at some unpropitious moment, and catch the little conjurer in the very act. There is upon record one instance of such a mishap occurring, and the chief actor long looked back to that day as the one of evil import, which made the turning-point in his life. This boy of eleven had had the peculiar good fortune

to have been taken care of by an old "mammy" who was at the time of his birth a great-grand-mother. Innumerable were the legends with which she filled his baby ears, and dark and significant were the warnings she conveyed of what would happen to him if the "Tom Lofflin" who lived up in the dormer windows ever caught him loitering around the yard after he had been naughty. Putting her detached tales together, the ingenious young gentleman evolved a certain philosophy of diabolatry with which to turn the tables on his ancient guardian. He made a private collection in his tin treasure box of such things as he deemed needful, and when the hour had arrived he persuaded "mammy" to sit out on the doorstep in the gathering dusk of a strangely sultry evening, and tell him her best ghost-story. As she grew increasingly enthusiastic and engrossed in her own creation—after the fashion of her tribe—Jim seized the opportunity to steal behind her, and throwing over her head a mosquito-net weighted with stones at each corner to keep it down, he shouted in a gruff, and what he hoped was a sepulchral tone, "Get on your knees, nigger; I'm Tom Lofflin come to carry you off!" And, as it would happen, there came at that instant a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a clap that shook the house. The startled old woman tumbled back

in a fainting fit, and when the repentant boy had summoned assistance the net was found entangled over her head, and the whole naughty plot was laid bare. For some time the negress vowed that Jim had "conju'ed" her, and the child really believed that he had done so. But the effect being so serious, he gave up the practice of magic, for which he had rare ability, and settled down into a commonplace boy.

The delightful feature of hoodooism, to the child, is the mystery and uncertainty which attend it. Always confident that something is going to happen, he never can conjecture what it will be, or whether it will involve him in unpleasant consequences. Nothing would astonish him more than to have some of his tricks succeed. But whether he scrutinizes the gardens and fields for the rock with a ring in it which will reveal, when pulled up, stairs leading to fairy-land, or whether he revels by night in masks and sheet draperies, or goes deeper into conjuring by slyly stealing hairs from the heads of his unsuspecting relatives to put through some process which will give him power over them, the child of all climes has it in him to be, as the child of the South pre-eminently is, an infant hoodooist.

"Children," says some one who evidently sympathizes with the feelings of a little one perpetually goaded beyond his inclinations, "should never be hurried. When a child is old enough to go to school, is early enough for him to learn that time is valuable. When it is little, let it develop slowly and naturally, expanding its life as deliberately as the rose or lily unfolds its buds."

## The Passing of Childhood

AT fourteen or fifteen the "May I?" of the child changes into the less deferential "Shall I?" or "Would you?" of youth, and our young daughter and son begin to avoid the necessity of asking leave to carry out their wishes. They are not so ready as they were a little while ago to explain all their plans, nor do they show so much anxiety for our co-operation. It is the tale of infancy repeated. Yesterday baby clung tenaciously to the mother's outstretched finger, not daring to loosen his grasp for an instant, as his little feet made the circuit of the room; to-day he stands alone and shakes his curls in answer to her offer of help, and his eyes glow with triumph when he finds that he can support himself on his own two sturdy legs.

Baby learns that he can walk, that he can reach things, that he can open and close doors, that he can select from many articles before him the particular one he wants; and so soon as he is conscious of his ability to act for himself he does it.

But birthdays come and go, and John is thir-



teen, and alive in every nerve and fibre with the full-pulsed life of the American temperament; he is ambitious, and seeks ideals and models from the great world outside the walls of home, and he talks excitedly of what "other boys" do, and finds precedent for the individual liberty he is beginning to pant and chafe after. Mary, with the first lustre of life yet fresh on her brow, has shed infantile docility like a garment, and has haunting visions of the joys of independence. It all seems sudden to the parent, and it is not quite pleasant. There is a pretty sentiment in favor of prolonging babyhood, and the world is brutal and ugly, and innocence is precious. Besides, the instant our fledglings are out of our sight untold anxieties begin for us. We are inclined to put off the evil day.

This is the way a sentiment can make us selfish, and fears for the future make us unjust. We have no right to choose what is easy for ourselves, however, rather than what is best for our children. It is the growing manhood and womanhood in them that begins to assert itself and claim recognition. The wings meant for wide flight ere long are rapidly unfolding, and the courage soon to be essential is manifesting itself in the feeling of pride and dignity which makes our boy long to go and come as he pleases, and our girl to make her own engagements and decide upon her own affairs. This

looks alarming, but, after all, it is no great matter, for what the children really crave now is liberty to exercise their own judgment.

John is dying to establish radical differences between himself and the little "kids" whose duty it is to be under watch and ward. He knows he is not a member of the Small-fry Society any longer; he has been living and learning for a dozen years and more, and he knows enough now to take some responsibility upon himself. And the girl is no less womanly in her own estimation; she feels herself worthy of trust, and at this juncture, if a mother is wise she will gratify this natural and inevitable ambition. It would be most injudicious to draw the lines closer when youthful high spirits begin to pull upon them. Liberty is to be retarded only for a year or so at the most, and for every restraint imposed there will be a corresponding excess. It is well known that some of the wildest youths, the friskiest young women, were kept down to a strict regimen as long as parental oversight lasted. They came to regard restraint, even when kindly meant, as an evil, to like their own way just for its own sake; and the result is anything but pleasant when young persons with untrained wills and judgment are turned loose upon the community. If they are not wilful they are weak; and accustomed to yield to stronger

minds, they become the prey of unscrupulous leaders.

The world claims our children from us in good time, and our constant aim should be to prepare them within the sanctuary of home for the self-government they ought to exercise as soon as they leave our care. The preparation must consist in a gradual substitution of their own judgment for ours. Beginning in trifles it should extend to nearly all matters by the time they reach fourteen or fifteen. After that, in a well-ordered home, commands should be obsolete. This is not to say that government should be suspended. There is no such thing in all this world as entire independence. We are all "under the law," but in enlightened communities not offensively so; not subservient, only rationally deferential. And this is the rule for parents to observe with their half-grown children; to have them feel that they are not so much under government as *at one* with it; that they, in a sense, make their own laws by being reasonable, and deferring to larger experience where their own falls short.

Never was there more need for tact and forbearance upon the parents' side, for at best, and even in homes where there has always been confidence, affection, and sympathy between their children and themselves, this period when childhood is fading

into the background with all its graces and beauties, and giving way to adolescence with its uncouthness and its crudities, is a trying one. To the onlooker who cares nothing about the young bud struggling through its rough green covering, the period of adolescence is simply an ugly period, to be borne with, as far as possible, as one bears other periodical afflictions; but to the eyes of love it has other aspects.

There is something pathetic in the struggle of the child to cast aside its child nature and put on the nature of manhood and womanhood. He is beset internally by misgivings, even while he is urged on by ambition. He wants—he scarce knows what; but something new, and never before possessed. Perhaps, in a nutshell, the great desire of his soul is to be left somewhat to himself, yet with sympathy within call, and to be trusted. It is a great evidence of tact now for the mother or father to say, with a kind smile, “Do what you think best about this matter, my son. You are old enough to judge what is right.” Happy responsibility! Delightful confidence! Influence is never stronger than when it withdraws slightly into the background, leaving its object apparently free.

A good deal is said nowadays about the extraordinary freedom our children have. Seemingly it

is so. But looking here and there an observer notes little real change among the average people.

A young friend of mine, whose happy married life has not yet driven from her memory a cramped and embittered youth, confided to me that the one idea that haunted her from eight to eighteen was that of running away from home. If she had been less conscientious, a little more reckless, what a gulf of ruin her innocent feet might have plunged into, to escape the intolerable nagging and interference she was subject to in her father's house !

We little know what effect our thoughtless and meaningless words of comment and chiding for every small matter that goes wrong produce upon the half-grown girl and boy. They are apt to be reserved, and to become sullen under restraints they dislike, and when this sullen attitude once sets in we may say farewell to all confidential intercourse between parent and child. To avert such an evil we will do well to apply all our powers of tact and kindness. Let us avoid arousing the spirit of perverseness that stirs in every young creature at this period of life, and by enlarging his opportunities for action as his ambition extends, soothe any budding revolutionary ideas and inspire in him the trust and confidence in parental benevolence that will be his safeguard when he needs advice and assistance. For youth never stands in

deeper need of wise guidance than at this time when there is a desire to dispense with it. But the guidance must be so wise, so tactful, so gentle, that even the most independent young soul will feel that love, and not force, is the motive power that draws him toward what is best, and that he is restrained by nothing except his own honor and trained sense of right.

The "awkward age" is with some happily balanced children little more than a name, but with many it is a period of real trial and a time of mortification and uneasiness to their parents. They are ungainly and noisy, and make the speeches that interested friends blush to hear. They are, in a word, infelicitous in every way, and one has to fight a strong desire to banish them out of sight until they shall have come into better relations with their surroundings. Yet there is no doubt that these unfledged men and women undergo as much suffering themselves as their *maladroit* conduct inflicts upon others, and the only thing that we can do for them now is to let them alone. In time, all the careful training they have had during their childhood will show results, and their chaotic ideas and opinions will settle down into an orderly arrangement, just as their arms and legs will grow less conspicuous from being brought into proper proportion with the rest of their bodies. The parental vanity that makes us sensitive to their defects of person and of manner must be conquered enough to keep us quiet and patient while nature turns our ugly duckling into the swan.

## Planning for Our Children

LONG ago, when I was a child myself in years, I read this sentence in Macaulay's Essays, and copied it into my note-book: "Nothing is more conducive to happiness than the free exercise of the mind in pursuits congenial to it." The experiences of later life have confirmed that swift-leaping recognition of a great truth, which impressed me then, rather with a prophetic sense of its import than as advice to be considered as immediately applicable. What was dimly perceived then as touching upon certain constraints and limitations, against which my young protests were strongly excited, has grown more distinct and taken a wide range as I have come to observe the unhappiness wrought in other lives through thwarted instincts and mistaken application of energy.

One of the most natural things in the world is the belief that what is agreeable to ourselves is good for other people. Selfishness disguises itself under the name of solicitude, and when an uncongenial acquaintance is wanted out of the way he is assured that the climate of Algeria will benefit him. Society offers many temptations of this sort,



but our influence over friends is according to the measure of their weakness. If they know what they like, no persuasion from us can make them prefer our suggestions to their own ideas, and our power lies only in the way of affecting their imagination.

But over our nearest and dearest we exercise the strong influence of affection and intimate relationship. If there is one member of any family who has a passion for management, he is likely to make life very anxious for the rest. "I should like to know if there's anything in the world you don't feel called on to see to!" exclaimed the grandmother in "Old-town Folks" to her strong-minded daughter Lois, when that spinster had taken away little Horace's Latin book so that he might the better centre his ambition upon the shoemaking for which she destined him. Such acts of interference are not uncommon, and they are not, unhappily, confined to spinster aunts, whose decrees are subject to revision by those in greater authority; but wives foresee their husbands' peculiar fitness for certain careers, and artfully cast a glamour over something utterly removed from previous experience; husbands take the liberty of deciding the province in which their wives' talents lie, and, above all, parents plan the future lives of their children, and surround them

from the cradle with a network constructed of their own preferences and prejudices, so that only the most resolute and original minds escape to enter upon the life for which nature has designed them.

Among my young friends is a lad who has shown from his kindergarten days decided taste for literary studies. He was unfortunately early deprived of the care of a tender mother; and his father, having a craze for science, has fairly bullied the child out of pursuits he loves and set him at the grind of a manual-training school. The chemical laboratory, which to minds having a bias that way would be delightful, is to him merely "a bad smell." He once walked fourteen miles in a pelt-ing rain to procure a Latin grammar, and pores over it every spare minute, while his short-sighted parent dins what he terms "common sense" into his unwilling ears, and binds this natural student to work that has a demoralizing effect upon his not over-strong nerves.

Another instance of misplaced ambition is that of a mother who decreed that her only son was to go through Harvard. He was a ruddy-cheeked, boisterous young fellow when I first saw him, and his soul was set upon things aquatic. His whole talk was of steamships, catboats, wherries, etc., and he had picked up a really surprising amount of

information from library books, and was enthusiastic upon this one subject, while dumb as an oyster when the conversation turned upon other matters. I suggested sending him to Annapolis to prepare for the navy, where family influence might have materially aided in his career, but his mother stubbornly resisted any interference with her plans. The other day the news came to me that the boy had run away from school and was on board a cruiser bound for Japan.

This running away is the almost certain expedient of determined natures. History teems with stories of boys fleeing from uncongenial occupations, and not nearly so often to shirk work as to enter upon work for which they feel themselves fitted. Yet this wrench which sets them free from unbearable tasks parts them also from the tender ties of home life, and exacts a sacrifice of affection which even genius must weep over. I know of a woman who, as a precocious girl of fourteen, was restrained from revolt against the scheme of education arranged for her, when, to her fancy, the world offered no enchantment equal to an artist's brush and a box of colors, by reading the following sentence in Charles Kingsley: "I have known girls think they were doing a fine thing by leaving uncongenial parents and cutting out for themselves, as they imagined, a more elevated or useful line of

life than that of mere home duties, while, after all, poor things, they were, in the name of God, neglecting the command of God to honor their father and mother." Conscience-bound, she went through the routine appointed for her for six long, weary years, when accident, not her own decision, made an artist's career possible to her. "But I lost six of the best years of life," she said, sadly, "because my poor mother was convinced that she knew me better than I knew myself."

It is certain that in early youth people often know themselves better than after the world has pulled them out of shape. The longings and aspirations of childhood are sometimes heaven-sent visions of our true vocation in life. Not always. Some natures seem to require a certain amount of experimenting before the right work can be found. The happiest gift a person can possess is the ability to recognize his own powers early. The earlier the better, for education grows constantly more complex, and the preparatory steps to each specialty are longer now than they used to be; so that time and energy are precious and not to be lightly wasted. Ordinarily children do not think much about what is to come after their school days are ended, and it is not well to force upon them the view of their coming responsibilities. Let them have their period of dalliance and lightness.

But we can, without their knowledge, gain much insight into their natures and aid them in a true self-development. We can direct their activities into useful channels and learn what they can do by their method of doing what we set for them. "Our work," said Carlyle, "is the mirror wherein we first see our natural lineaments."

The trouble with educators is that they are apt to see in the young a reflection of themselves, and interpret signs wrongly. We want to force our own individuality upon others when perhaps they have individuality of their own entirely different. This would not occur if all parents were convinced of the truth of Macaulay's saying, that "happiness is chiefly to be found in congenial work." Such a large part of the lives of most of us must be passed in work that it is heart-rending to think how many people are passing the day in uncongenial labors, going about their tasks mechanically, while deep down in their souls is some yearning that shall never find expression in this world. No matter if it is a yearning for something not so good as the thing they are doing, not so high nor so honorable. High and low are only conventional words, and have nothing to do with happiness. The one perfect bliss is an inspiration, and it comes at times to every one who is pursuing his natural vocation. In the midst of pain and despair it flashes over the

artist at his easel; while he stammers and fears to fail, it breathes sweet suggestion into the ears of the orator; perplexities and weariness are forgotten by the little dressmaker who, loving her art, feels the stimulus of a new idea. And who shall interpret the deep joy of the born sailor as he gazes upon a starry night over the infinite waves and feels himself afloat in his natural element? How do we know but that the scissors-grinder who prefers grinding scissors has his moments of pleasure over a well-ground blade, even as the cook triumphs in the success of her *entrée*. It matters not what work we do in the world so that it is *our* work, and the gratifications attending congenial occupation are so immense that even partial success in life—that is, less money and less rank than we wish—gives us, upon the whole, more happiness than a complete prosperity gained at the expense of much dull and embittering grind in an occupation chosen solely with a view to that end.

It is true there are facile, adaptable natures that seem able to accommodate themselves to any circumstances and can do one thing as well as another; but people of this sort usually need a large amount of pleasure outside of their work, if they do not shirk work altogether. There are many drones in the great human hive, but they are not born intentionally. The world needs persons of

talent, of energy, and, above all, of rightly directed industry. It is the duty of parents to see to it that their children's steps are early set in the path that may lead them to usefulness and contentment; to give them, as far as possible, a chance for development of their natural abilities, and leave them liberty of choice as to their life pursuit.

There is a certain amount of general culture essential to every rank of life, and as regards this we cannot abate duties to humor a child's whims. But let us repress the disposition, so natural to a parent, to make a child the vehicle of our own ambition; let us refrain from appointing the infant to a particular niche, or ordaining that at any cost of pain to him he is to accomplish a certain destiny. Such planning is presumptuous. There is a tendency in every being to unfold in a fashion of its own, and our duty is to watch, to help, and to encourage, and to respect the wonder of individuality

We should not put a young mind through any mill because that mill is fashionable, nor because it has always been patronized by our family. Traditions and customs are bagatelles compared with the welfare of a single human being. Yet they are larger in our eyes because easier understood than character. To that we are apt to attach less importance than to worldly success. But oh, that is



such a will-o'-the-wisp ! Our planning cannot secure it for our children. After taking the greatest trouble we may see them perish of want, no matter what we may have chosen for them. Let us plan but little, then; let us leave their souls free. Success !—success is doing well the thing we were formed to do.



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